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October 2014
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Four famished friends, a prehistoric skipper and choppy seas. This scenario did not bode well for us. I'd never seen someone turn green before until today, but sea legs or not, nothing was going to keep us from sinking our teeth into the best pizza on the planet!

The old man and the



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PRINTED BY

Emirates Printing Press LLC, Dubai

PUBLISHED BY



Head Office, PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE
Tel: +971 4 440 9100
Fax: +971 4 447 2409
Group Office, Dubai Media City
Building 4, Office G08, Dubai, UAE

A publication licensed by IMPZ

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While the publishers have made every
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information in this magazine, they will not
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Every year, October marks the beginning of what I like to call 'fun season' in this part of the world, with the weather taking a turn for the better, and festivities kicking off. Luckily for us, it also coincides with our birthday issue, so we always have an excuse to start celebrating!

When we were sitting down to plan our birthday special feature a few months back, Assistant editor Nicola came up with the idea of showcasing some of the fantastic, creative home-grown foodie brands we've had the pleasure of seeing emerge (you know how much we love encouraging local talent!), so we reached out to seven that caught our eye, and got the nine lovely ladies (two of the brands are run by duos) to bake us a special cake and pose for us! Senior designer Odilaine came up with the shoot concept of a cake cupboard, we roped in talented photographer Neil Walton to work with us, and the delectable results are there for you to see in our special nine-page feature on p50. If this doesn't inspire you to get baking, we don't know what will!

There's plenty more inspiration to tempt you into the kitchen this month – whether it's to increase your street cred with the little ones by cooking up a seriously impressive Halloween feast (*Eat, Drink and Be Scary!*, p45), or to celebrate Diwali in traditional style with the recipes award-winning chef Amrish Sood has shared with us in *Cook up a delicious Diwali dinner* on p45.

Being Indian, I enjoy Diwali of course, but where I come from, the festival of lights is overshadowed by the bigger Durga Puja festivities that take Bengal by storm just a couple of weeks prior. It's around this time of year that a real sense of nostalgia, and, dare I say it, homesickness really hits me – that infectious festive mood, lots of feasting and catching up with friends, themed Puja pandals (canopied temporary 'temples' for the goddess), and an inescapable sense of spirituality that hides underneath all the colour. To get a tiny taste of what I mean, read our *Food safari: Bengal* feature on p80.

Whatever you're celebrating this month – Eid, Diwali, Halloween, or just life – make it special!

Sudeshna



THE 2014 BBC GOOD FOOD ME AWARDS
2nd round of voting starts October 15.
#bbcfawards2014



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Editor's picks

◆ Even confirmed champagne drinkers will enjoy this non-alcoholic bubbly, p37



◆ You'll never guess this delicious cheesecake is dairy-free! p55



◆ Breakfasting with giraffes was just one of the unforgettable memories I have from Kenya, p90

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*GOURMET LIFESTYLE

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Our recipe descriptions

- V** Suitable for vegetarians
- ❄** You can freeze it
- ❄** Not suitable for freezing
- Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make
- A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
- More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks

Low fat 12g or less per portion

Low cal 500 calories or less per main.

Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving

Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:

P Contains pork

A Contains alcohol



Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

Ace: 04-3411906

Al Ghandi Electronics: 04-2570007

Berghoff Outlet: 04-4393473

Biorganic: 04-4433535

Bloomingdale's Home: 04-3505333

C Wonder: 04-4099000

Crate & Barrel: 04-3990125

Home Centre: 04-3414441

Homes R Us: 04-4469820

Lafayette Gourmet: 04-3399933

Lavide Sous Vide Dubai: 04-4229515

Lakeland: 04-3236081

Nespresso: 04-3928181

Patchi Boutique: 04-5515749

Tavola: 04-3402933

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are approximately the same as UAE Dirhams.

Your say

We love to hear from you!

TEEN TROUBLES

As a proud and doting father of a tween, it has always been challenging to get him to eat a healthier and balanced diet, given the prevalent fast food culture and unhealthy meal choices. The Pizza pasta salad, Japanese style bento box recipes (*Pack a healthy lunchbox*, September 2014), and recipes from *Easy school days* were amazingly creative, nutritious, and not to forget mouth-wateringly tasty. The Food Lessons feature inspired me to get him involved and participate in meal planning, shopping and preparation. Kids love to eat the food they make and my son took great pride in serving up the chicken satay (*Cooking with kids: Chicken Satay*) and taking gourmet home-packed school lunches and salads. Kudos for putting together a fabulous issue full of inspiring recipes to get all those budding Jamies and Nigellas into the kitchen – truly a parent's delight! Keep up the good work!

Dominic Francis



BIG BROTHER COOKING!

My mom's terrible bouts of homesickness make her travel back to her homeland often. During those days, the task of fixing my little brother's lunchbox falls on my frail shoulders. Relying on bread, sausages and mayonnaise, we were reaching the breaking point with my poor talent and his poorer



Win!

The winner of the Star Letter gets a **Cuisinart Juice Extractor** worth **Dh900** from **Tavola**. This

stylish and quiet juicer features a 3-inch feed tube that can fit whole fruit and vegetables, and has an adjustable flow spout so that juices don't spill onto the kitchen counter. It also has a five-speed control dial which allows you to make juices within minutes, and a specially designed filter basket to reduce foam on top of your freshly squeezed concoctions.



Star Letter

A MATTER OF THE FUTURE

I just picked up the new issue of *BBC Good Food ME*, and I have to say, the magazine has proven that the name is right for it. There is an impressive variety of such good recipes inside. I stress out at the start of every school year with my little fussy eater, trying to find the best way to keep him healthy and happy with lunchbox options. I am thankful for the recipes that are in the September issue, as they are all very simple and at the same time yummy. In addition to that, reading the educational story of Gary Rhodes (*Food Lessons*, September 2014) inspired me to open the topic as soon as possible in our school, because having healthy options at the school canteen, as well as at school events, is very important for

children's health. Whenever there's an event, I wonder why parents bring junk food instead of healthy options! I didn't have the courage so far to bring this matter

up, but this has encouraged me to do so. I am putting in great effort preparing homemade food every day, without any domestic help, so this is a big deal for me. The school hours are long and I have to make breakfast, lunch and two snacks, it is quite difficult, but what really matters is having healthy children.

Emilija Andjelkovic



patience, when thanks to a foodie friend, I came across the lunchbox article (*Pack a healthy lunchbox*) in the September issue. Imagine my excitement on finding a bunch of ten-minute recipes for a filling, healthy and exciting lunchbox! I learned to make vegetables look cute, fruits look fancy, and

eggs look funny! Packing lunchboxes for my brother has turned out to be a breeze. I have a feeling my mom will have a thing or two to learn from me once she's back this time – all thanks to *BBC Good Food ME* for such a helpful feature!

- Sachin S



From our social media pages

- * So many super meal ideas for October 2014 #inspiringstuff
– Zoe McCleanmcr
- * This is my favourite magazine. Get it delivered right at my door step every month.
– Gaganjeet S. Sethi
- * Can't wait for the October issue to come out – it's the birthday month again!
– Leanna Jone

TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of *BBC Good Food ME*!

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:



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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Serafina

DINE IN THE CITY

FOUR FAB NEW RESTAURANTS TO CHECK OUT

* Big Chefs, a new casual dining restaurant at The Beach, is the place to visit for gourmet burgers, wood-fired pizza, and homemade gelato milkshakes, to sate your comfort food cravings. The café and brasserie offers dishes made with high-quality fresh produce for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Call 04-5515302.

* Celeb-favoured NYC Italian restaurant, Serafina, has opened its doors in Dubai at Souk Al Bahar. The Italian eatery offers 24 types of pizzas, plus pasta and seafood, at affordable prices, and boasts an outdoor terrace with fountain views – winning formula, we think! Call 04-3638447.

* Who can resist a French éclair oozing with fruit or cream filling? If, like us, you'd say 'not me', then hotfoot it to Éclair, the new boutique-style café in Jumeirah Lakes Towers specialising in éclairs in innovative flavours like salted caramel, Japanese matcha green tea, rose and pistachio, and milk chocolate and passion fruit. They're available in mini bite-sized versions too! Dhs8.50 for mini éclairs, call 04-4279901.



This month, we're....

Doing our bit for Breast Cancer awareness month by buying pink pastries like praline rose tart and rhubarb strawberry verrines from Delicacy, Fairmont the Palm – Dhs5 from each purchase goes towards the Pink Caravan charity. You can also enjoy a pink-themed afternoon tea at Mashrabiya Lounge at the hotel (Dhs125 per person with Dhs10 donated to charity). Call 04-4573388.



SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

Want to get serious about honing your Thai cooking abilities? Learn to cook like the pros at Benajorong, Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi. Over a course of eight classes held under the guidance of Chef Yongyos Chimthep, you will learn everything from Pad Thai to wok-fried chicken. The two-hour classes take place on Sunday and Thursday, Dhs800 per person for the month, and 50 per cent discount for those who want to dine with the family after each class. Call 02-6988137.

“Real food doesn't have ingredients. Real food is ingredients.”

– Celebrity chef, cookbook author and TV personality Jamie Oliver

Mark your calendars: October 30 to November 1

The Dubai World Hospitality Championship 2014 is back again at Dubai World Trade Centre with a series of workshops and competitions to bring the city's prominence in the culinary field to the forefront. The Hospitality Sector, Emirati, International and GCC product competitions are just some of the highlights of the event, bringing leading chefs together under one roof, but visitors can enjoy plenty of other activities including sampling Emirati food, taking a look at the model heritage village and culinary museum, and watching the chefs in action. Free entry for all. Visit dwhc.ae.

What's trending

#infusedwater

Everyone's been infusing water lately, and why not, if it makes you drink more of it? On Instagram and Twitter, we've spotted pictures of bottles of aqua, filled with slices of strawberry, cinnamon sticks and mint leaves – just lemon slices are so 2013! We've also come across fulvic-infused, all-natural mineral water from the brand, blk on Instagram, which is high in pH and is black in colour!



Home



Not so cool for schools!

Following on from our report last month on healthy food being provided in school canteens, we are delighted to learn that the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) has announced fines for schools and food suppliers who do not comply with the guidelines set out by them for lunch items. The guidelines, implemented earlier this year to tackle obesity in children, and instill healthy eating food habits in school, can be found online on www.dm.gov.ae. Not to say we had anything to do with it or anything!!



78%

the percentage of the UAE population suffering from Vitamin D deficiency. Time to eat more oily fish, eggs and spinach, peeps!



This just in:

Move over Diwali diyaas, we're celebrating the festival of lights with these cute, colourful Mario Luca Giusti elephant candles – Indian-inspired kitsch never looked this good! Dhs275 at Bloomingdale's Home-Dubai.

We love designer-gastronomy collaborations! London Fashion Week 2014 just saw Anya Hindmarch collaborating with Kellogg's – they made limited-edition cereal for show-goers called Fashion Flakes. And the next collaboration that's sure to create waves is the launch of Prêt-à-Portea-The Jimmy Choo Collection afternoon tea at The Berkeley, London. The pastry chefs – who actually have the collection in their kitchen to derive inspiration from – promise stunning creations that will mimic the fashion house's bags and shoes. The afternoon tea is available from October 13-19, from £41 (around Dhs250) per person. Visit www.maybourne.com.



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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



Set the mood at your Diwali party with these **BAHARA ROUND TEA LIGHT HOLDERS** in black and gold. From Dhs19 at **HOME CENTRE**.



Alfresco season is here and it's time to spruce up the outdoors. We love this practical wicker **OUTDOOR SEATING SET** from **DANUBE HOME**. Dhs4,199.



This retro-licious **KENSINGTON STATION CLOCK** will liven up any kitchen. Dhs99 at **ACE**.



Give a friend or loved one a personalised gift, like this **PERIODIC MUG**, which offers the option of printing their name and their qualities in a chemistry-inspired periodic table style – funky! £9.95 (around Dhs60) plus shipping, at **MORETHANWORDS.UK.COM**.



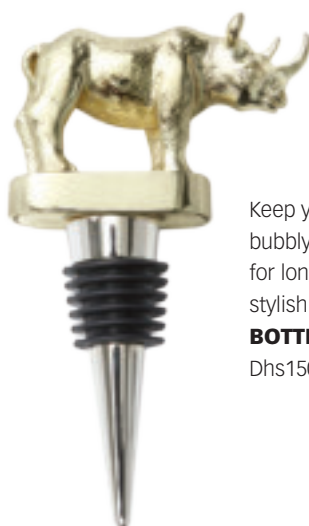
There's nothing like lanterns to add warmth to your home. This **ANTIQUE BRASS LANTERN** complements most dining tables and looks great on the patio as well. From Dhs329 at **INDIGO LIVING**.



Chic coffee just got a lot more affordable! Grab this **BLACK AND SILVER FRENCH COFFEE PRESS** before it flies off shelves. Dhs150 at **BERGHOFF** in Dubai Outlet Mall.



Chocoholics will love the all-new chocolate line, **PATCHINO AQUA** – customised for Atlantis, The Palm – which reflects the resort's marine theme in its packaging and chocolate shapes. Available at the **PATCHI BOUTIQUE** at the resort.



Keep your bottles of bubbly or cordials fresh for longer, with this stylish **ANIMAL BOTTLE STOPPER**. Dhs150 at **C. WONDER**.

Show off your baking skills this Halloween, by serving up cupcakes with gummy worms in these **TRICK OR TREAT SKELETON CUPCAKE HOLDERS**, when the little ones come around. Dhs85 (for 8 skeletons and 24 cupcake cases) at **LAKELAND**.





Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.

Q What can I use as a substitute for xanthan gum when baking?

A. Xanthan is a great gluten-free ingredient for recipes. If you prefer not to use it, or don't have it on hand, use water-absorbing seeds such as chia or flax seeds as they are good binding agents and play the same role as xanthan gum. You can either grind it to make a powder or add the whole seeds.



Q How do I intensify the flavour of steamed foods like fish and chicken when I make it ahead for lunch the next day?

A. Steamed foods are best eaten right away – that's how I like to eat it. However, if you are preparing it ahead, I suggest coating it with nutritional yeast flakes, olive oil and miso after steaming, to add extra flavour.

Q What's the best way to take toast to work and still have it crispy?

A. If you're making a toasted sandwich at home, I would recommend completely cooling it down before packing. Toast is also best packed in foil, without any soggy ingredients on it.

Q I've tasted elderflower cordial in mocktails, and have noticed it in a few desserts as well. Could you please tell me how to use it?

A. We usually make this cordial every spring, back home in the UK. I like using it to make a jelly with 250ml white verjuice, 50ml elderflower cordial, 300 grams of any soft fruit, 2 gelatin sheets, a little lemon juice and teaspoon of sugar. The cordial has a lovely floral aroma and a sweet taste. It can be used in cakes, and pairs well with fish and white meat as well.

Q I can't find pumpkin spice powder in any store in the UAE, and would really like to make pumpkin spice lattes for my Halloween party. Could you please tell me which ingredients or spices need to be mixed to make it?

A. Pumpkin spice lattes are great in the cooler weather! All you need to do is mix 4 tablespoons of ground cinnamon, 4 teaspoons ground nutmeg, 4 teaspoons ground ginger, and 3 teaspoons ground all-spice, together in a bowl. When making your latte, take 1 teaspoon of the pumpkin spice mix and gently toast it to release the rich aromas, before adding it to the drinks.



Andy's ingredient of the month

Curly kale is back this season and as always tastes great as kale chips or in salads. The nutritious, antioxidant-rich vegetable tastes great finely sliced or chopped, in soups and salad, and is packed with vitamins A, C and K. It's also a great source of iron and calcium, and can be eaten toasted with pumpkin spice powder or local Bharat spice mixed with lemon juice and olive oil.



Menu planner

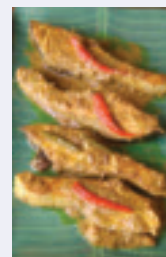
Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

Indian-inspired dinner party



Starter

These **Indian paneer skewers** are easy to prepare and nibble on, p28



Main course

Try something different with this Bengali-style **Mustard salmon**, p82



Dessert

Give the quintessential Indian dessert, **Carrot pudding**, a twist with this recipe! p48

On test: Kitchen gadgets

We review some of the newest appliances on the market.



Ardee Electric pressure cooker

A pressure cooker is a must-have for any busy kitchen, for effortless one-pot cooking, and this sturdy option is perfect for large families with its 6L capacity, and really easy to use digital timer and setting options.

What we liked: Having been accustomed to traditional pressure cookers which can involve quite a bit of guesswork, using this was an absolute breeze. Simply toss in whatever ingredients you want, sauté or pre-cook as the recipe demands, then lock the lid, set the 'whistle' to airtight setting, and choose your cooking time, or simply opt for one of the pre-set timings. Our first attempt at using this was to make a chicken cacciatore, which brought out all the joys of slow-cooked food – tender, fall-off-the-bone meat anyone? – in under half an hour. Ideal for making stews, curries and lots more, this really is the perfect appliance for quick weeknight suppers.

What we didn't like: If we had to nit-pick, cooking on the induction plate of the unit is a bit slower if you're used to gas. It also takes up a lot of counter space, so isn't really suitable for small kitchens.

To buy: Dhs501 at Citrusstv.com.

Moulinex Masterchef 8000 food processor

This all-new food processor from Moulinex allows you to slice, grate, blend, mix – you name it! It includes accessories like a blender, emulsifying disc, a reversible blade, metal blade and a spatula – making this phenomenal gadget a must-have for any kitchen.

What we liked: If you are a healthy eater who loves adding fruits and vegetables into your meals – this is the gadget for you. It is quick and easy to use with attachments like the reversible blade being really efficient in slicing and grating vegetables for salads. With the blender, we made a fruit smoothie which was as good as the ones available from smoothie bars. If you like baking, use the mixer attachment to mix cupcake ingredients together – it does an impressive job.

What we didn't like: The appliance is quite bulky and uses up a bit of space in your kitchen.

To buy: Dhs499 at leading supermarkets and electronic stores.



Steama steamer

Any self-respecting healthy kitchen should have a steamer, it comes with three airtight containers, and has a 9L capacity, making it ideal for couples who want to cook food in bulk, or big family meals.

What we liked: Steaming food isn't rocket science, but when you have to do absolutely nothing other than add water to the base, switch it to on to the time desired, and add the food in, whether it's veg or salmon or chicken, without hovering around to check when it's done, that's our kind of gadget. The convenience factor of the Steama is a major plus, as you can seal and refrigerate the boxes you steam in for and they are microwave-proof too – perfect for lunch the next day! You can also steam rice in the bowl, and place it in one of the boxes, so there's no use for multiple gadgets or pans. Now that we've gotten used to this, we can't live without it!!

To buy: Dhs340 at Lakeland.



Siemens EQ.8 series 300 coffee machine

Coffee addicts, we've got some good news for you! We may have hit solid gold with this new Siemens coffee machine. When you first look at the appliance, it's hard to ignore its beautiful glossy black and steel exterior – it's definitely aesthetically pleasing. However, once you do get beyond admiring the exterior, the functionality doesn't disappoint either. It has a user-friendly LCD display, an option to use two cups simultaneously, a feature to save up to six beverage profiles and adjustable temperatures.

What we liked: Being able to prepare a cup of coffee just how you want it is great! The machine's several options allow you to decide how you want your coffee – you can adjust the temperature of your beverage, decide how strong you want it to be, froth your milk and so on. It makes the experience quite similar to ordering coffee at your local coffee house. What's particularly nice though is how unexpectedly quiet it is when making any beverage. Its special noise reduction feature making it super-silent, is truly a blessing. The machine also has the child-lock option, which means you can avoid any potential disasters by pressing the wrong buttons!

What we didn't like: The price is steep, so it's definitely an investment buy. You also have to keep up with regular maintenance to enjoy smooth functioning.

To buy: Dhs5,499 at Better Life.



What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com or [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).

Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Indian



Where: **Mint Leaf of London, DIFC**

What's it like: The rather large lounge and restaurant, wrapped around the best part of the 15th floor of the Emirates Financial Towers building, offers panoramic views of the city through the floor-to-ceiling glass windows, with an open kitchen, competing with this view. The décor is elegant and subdued – not a speck of Indian kitsch in sight – with the themed mint leaf pattern replicated throughout, accented by studio-style spotlights.

While the restaurant is an import of London, thankfully, you don't get the diluted British version of Indian curries here – you get authentic flavours, given a fun, modern twist which are designed to surprise the palate. So, for example, an amuse bouche of fried cheese balls may look like an arancini, and come served with balsamic reduction, but when you bite into it, it instantly evokes the flavours of a South Indian vada.

Our starters of lasooni chicken tikka (boneless chicken cubes marinated with garlic) and adraki (ginger) lamb chops, plus the maître de-recommended beetroot pudina tikki (mint-flavoured beetroot fritters) were all delicious, recreating classic flavours but with subtlety – no overpowering spices here! For mains we opted for Punjabi chicken masala, which paired perfectly with a paratha, along with another North Indian classic, bhindi do piazza (okra with onions). Our other protein choice was the malai lobster tail – another delicate symphony of the sweetness of seafood perfectly complemented by a hint of spice. Served with cumin potatoes and slightly charred asparagus, it is a complete meal in itself, but tastes equally good accompanied with a bit of fragrant saffron rice.

For dessert, we were tempted to try the creative takes on brownie (with coconut) or crème brûlée (in masala chai flavour), but decided to play it safe with an Indian sampler platter – a mini rasmalai, gulab jamun, and rose kulfī, all eternal favourites and done justice to, in these kitchens. But what left us with the sweetest taste in our mouths when leaving were the

complimentary paan pannacotta (although it felt more like a paan ice cream), the classic betel nut leaf-flavoured finale to an Indian meal that we were served.

If you want to go: Around Dhs550 for two (without drinks). Call 04-7060900.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

Best for:
An elegant
night out

Where: **Delhi Darbar Express, Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

What's it like: The most authentic Indian food can sometimes be found in casual dining restaurants – even celebrity chef Vineet Bhatia thinks so! – and this restaurant validates just that. This express outlet, part of the renowned Delhi Darbar chain, is your everyday casual, community restaurant specialising in traditional homely Indian food. White wooden tables with red leather seating create a cosy ambience, making it an inviting option for those who choose to come here – and not just resort to takeout, something they're popular for.

The menu selection is varied, including everything from tempting tandoori items like fresh, juicy shrimps cooked over a charcoal fire, to tender, mild-spicy chunks of chargrilled mutton Bihari kebab marinated in a spicy yoghurt (order the half plate for appetisers). For mains, my dining partner and I relished the creamy butter chicken, that wasn't too sweet or spicy, and rogan gosht (slow-cooked succulent mutton with gravy) with roomali roti (a paper-thin soft flatbread), and aromatic butter-y garlic naans. We also tried the Bombay-style mutton biryani and were pleased with the texture of grainy rice, fried onions, and chunky meat pieces, accompanied by saffron and cinnamon notes in every bite. For dessert, we couldn't resist carrot halwa, an Indian classic (find the recipe to make your own on p48!), which we devoured with a scoop of vanilla ice cream at the end of our meal.

The authentic flavours, combined with friendly service, were clearly the perfect formula for the restaurant being as busy as it appeared to be, even on a weeknight!

If you want to go: Around Dhs120 for two. Call 04-4277708.

- Nicola Monteath



#classicIndian
#currytime



#tandooridelights
#juicystarters

Best for:
A relaxed meal
at affordable
prices



Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWERS

Seven-tastic Birthday competition



It's our birthday, but you get the goodies!

Seven months of indulgent dinner dates on us

One lucky winner is in for a treat with a spectacular prize of seven dinners at seven restaurants across various Rotana Hotels around the UAE.



Take your partner along on a culinary adventure around the country with an exclusive five-star dinner date (worth Dhs1,000 each) every month for the next seven months. The prize includes:

- * **A dinner at Brauhaus, Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi, to indulge in German specialties**
- * **An aromatic and mouthwatering Indian meal at Indigo, Beach Rotana Abu Dhabi**
- * **British classics at Cooper's, Park Rotana Abu Dhabi**
- * **Succulent steak and a selection of seafood items at Rodeo Grill, Al Bustan Rotana Dubai**
- * **A selection of Thai specialties at Blue Elephant, Al Bustan Rotana Dubai**
- * **Authentic Italian pizza, pasta and more at Rosso, Amwaj Rotana**
- * **The teppanyaki experience and Japanese delicacies at Benihana, Amwaj Rotana, JBR**

To be in with a chance to win this special prize, simply log on to www.bbcgoodfoodme.com and answer this question:

Why should you win seven months' worth of free dinner dates?

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

✴ New on the menu!

Michelin-starred celebrity chef Gary Rhodes has unveiled a new menu at Rhodes Twenty10, Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort and Spa. Diners can now relish creative additions like beetroot and creamy goats cheese towers, lobster Caesar salad and warm duck quiche with orange, fig and maple dressed salad – all made to share. Mains such as fried pistachio king prawns and braised short rib have also been added to the menu.

À la carte menu prices. Call 04-3165550.



Rhodes Twenty10



✴ Girl's night out

For the Sake of Sushi night at Toko, is a great alternative to ladies' night – especially for those looking for a stylish do with lounge-style music played by a saxophonist. Indulge in a selection of tempura, tuna and California-rolls, as well as nigiri, all made with fresh seafood, accompanied by hot or cold sake.

Tuesday evenings, Dhs225 per person.

Call 04-4428383.



✴ Crustacean cravings

Prawn lovers should make a beeline for Belgian Café, Dubai Festival City, to fill up on 1kg of grilled king tiger prawns with garlic bread, mixed salad, Belgian fries and 2 draughts.

Saturday evenings, Dhs220 per person, call 04-7011127.

✴ Beachfront dining

Planning a culinary weekend? Amwaj at Desert Island Resort and Spa by Anantara has introduced a selection of new dishes inspired by the Middle East and Levant to their menu. Try Lebanese-style fatteh bel lahm (a lamb dish), Armenian-style chicken livers, and sujuk dadah (Middle Eastern spicy sausages), while taking in the views of Sir Bani Yas Island – it will be worth the trip out!

À la carte prices. Call 02-8015400.

✴ Greek delight

Get a taste of all things Greek at Le Meridien Abu Dhabi, with the opening of Acropolis. The roomy restaurant with outdoor seating is the place to try mezze, Greek mojitos made with ouzo, and a range of authentic specialties, while listening to live music.

Call 02-6446666.



✴ Something spicy?

Stylish fine-dining Indian restaurant Angar, at Yas Viceroy Abu Dhabi, is offering the perfect excuse to dine out on a weeknight with their Spice, Spice, Baby! Promotion, which offers a sampling of their traditional-with-a-twist delicacies created by the award-winning chef. Tuck into a three-course set menu featuring unlimited helpings of dishes like tandoori kebabs, butter chicken and black dal makhani (lentils), served along with fresh naan breads. *Monday evenings, from Dhs155 per person, Call 02-6560600.*



✴ Cantonese combinations

Make a beeline for Hakkasan Dubai to try the hot new additions to their menu, all made with fresh ingredients. You can look forward to delicacies like Osmanthus Wagyu beef ribeye, and wok-fry sweet and spicy scallops, which offer a blend of savoury and sweet flavours.

À la carte menu prices. Call 04-3848484.



* Saturday – the Italian way!

Gather a group of friends and visit Frankie's Italian Bar and Grill at Jumeirah Beach Residence, for a casual lunch which features sharing platters of weekly-changing specialties. Highlights include beef tagliata marinated with black pepper, mushroom ragù, stewed sea bass, cherry tomatoes, black olives and capers and other dishes, all made with seasonal produce.

Every Saturday, Dhs230 per person. Call 04-3994311.

* German celebrations

Celebrate Oktoberfest at Hofbräuhaus, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai, Deira, with a selection of Bavarian delicacies including potato salad, veal dumplings in caper sauce, German sausage, pretzels, herb roasted chicken from the carving station, and steamed yeast dough with cherries.

October 1-31, from Dhs250 per person.

Call 04-6077977.



* Gourmet business lunch

Seal the deal over lunch at Silk and Spice restaurant, Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche, enjoying a mouth-watering Thai set menu featuring dim sum, main course dishes like Thai green curry or Thai yellow curry salmon with lychee, and water chestnut in coconut milk for dessert.

Every Sunday-Thursday, from Dhs89 per person. Call 02-8137777.

* Roast time

The quintessential British Sunday roast, is now available at Wheeler's of St James. Sate your tastebuds with a refreshing Pimms Cup beverage before relishing the heritage beetroot salad with goat cheese or poached king prawns with lettuce and egg for starters. Tuck into lamb and grass fed beef with trimmings after – corn fed chicken breast and fish pie are also available. End with sticky toffee pudding, or stilton and pear tartlet with pistachios, for a mix of sweet and savoury flavours.

Fridays and Saturdays from 12-5pm. Dhs225 per person, call 04-3860899.

* Sizzling deal

Sizzling Wok, Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai will be serving a selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian sizzlers such as roast lamb with bean sprouts, seafood, agedashi with tofu, chicken with miso glaze and crispy duck with hoisin sauce, during this month.

October 8-24, from Dhs40-60. Call 04-4078000.



* Brunch in style!

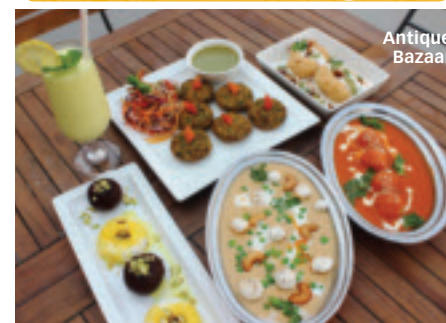
For a new brunch destination, head to The Steak and Jazz brunch at The Foundry, South Sun Abu Dhabi. Whet your appetite with freshly made carpaccio, foie grass from a live cooking station – don't miss the foie grass ice cream! – French and Irish oysters, and seafood salads for starters. Main course options include succulent steaks – you can choose the cut and doneness you prefer – as well as lobster thermidor with sides. For desserts, we highly recommend the crème Brule and cheesecake. All this, accompanied by jazz from a duo – what's not to like?

Fridays, from Dhs275 per person.

Call 02-8184888.



Diwali dining



🕯 Celebrate the festival of lights with a special Diwali set-menu at Antique Bazaar, Four Points by Sheraton Bur Dubai. Diners can choose the vegetarian or non-vegetarian option which features starters like moong dal pakori (a fried lentil snack), mains such as Angoori kofta curry, mutter makhana korma, as well as traditional Indian sweets.

From Dhs160, available from October 22-25.

Call 04-3977444.

🕯 Enjoy delicacies such as chicken reshmi kebab, mustard prawn curry, soya been ki tikki, and butta kabab as part of the Diwali - Festival of Lights menu at Mahec, Le Meridien Dubai. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian menu options are both available. *Dhs169 per person, on October 22 and 23. Call 04-2170000.*

The Doha diaries

Our Doha-based columnist has her finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.

Home Comforts

Earlier this year there was a very big outcry in certain sections of the community in Doha. At the centre of this drama was the shortage of a particular canned tomato brand at supermarkets. For non-Americans like me, we could barely discern the difference between this brand and any other tinned tomatoes.

But apparently it is more than this – and goes to the very heart of the American psyche. For the record, it's diced tomatoes and chillies and 'secret spices' and is a central ingredient for many Tex Mex dishes. The shortage was so acute that people were using luggage allowances to bring bag bulk orders and others scoured the internet for recipes for recreating the taste.

My tone may be one of scorn, but deep down, we all know what it's like to miss a 'home comfort'. We may be long-inducted expats and think of ourselves as international, but globalisation hasn't completely homogenised our taste buds (or longings). For me, it's the Australian icon, an yeast-based savoury paste (and please, no arguments about the alleged superiority of the British original version) and Australian specialty chocolates. I do a supermarket sweep each time I'm back in Australia and my mother also stocks up for months prior to my arrival. I have a Dutch friend who misses the quality Gouda cheese made in The Netherlands and is rarely available here. Another British friend craves crumpets. South Africans I know make their own biltong (dried meat similar to jerky) to compensate for the lack of availability in Doha. Ever so often in Qatar, expats will rush to particular supermarkets when word gets around the bush telegraph that a particular product is available. Photos are posted on social media (I may be guilty of this). Then, like the mythical tinned tomatoes, they disappear... I know of others who hoard canned pumpkin before the festive season in case of a run on the product!

Recently I spoke to a friend who works in retail in Qatar and asked him about the vagaries of bringing international 'speciality goods' into the market, surely it was a case of supply and demand. Apparently it's not that simple, and supermarkets are at the mercy of suppliers who may have other priorities. Quite often this is also related to the availability of other products with more widespread demand. This explains the feast or famine approach. While I do stock up when I am at home, I also enjoy trying new things – different products from the Middle East and beyond. And as I've learnt over the years, 'taste of home' can be sometimes be something completely new.

- Rachel Morris is a Qatar-based writer and food blogger (lifeonthewedge.net).



The latest food news and happenings in the city.

Making travel tastier!

The brand new Hamad International Airport in Doha is changing the game when it comes to airport dining, with home-grown foodie concepts and chef-driven restaurants providing a refreshing alternative to fast food chains. The next time you're flying in or out from Doha, stop by the newly opened Soprafino, a restaurant from Canadian-Italian celebrity chef Massimo Capra (who also runs successful airport restaurants in North America). The larger-than-life Capra has personally designed the menu – which includes everything from caprese salad to comforting pastas, gourmet risottos, and delicious thin-crust pizzas, all made fresh in-house – to ensure it strikes the perfect balance between fine dining and quick, on-the-go eating for travellers, and also promises the menu will change regularly. The spacious, 'open-plan' restaurant also houses a retail counter – perfect for last-minute gift shopping!

www.dohahamadairport.com.



Sophisticated lunch

Alain Ducasse's restaurant, IDAM, at The Museum of Islamic Art will soon be home to Doha's stylish crowd in the afternoons with the launch of a new weekly changing lunch menu. Diners can indulge in a three-course menu featuring mezze such as a summer salad with flowers and vegetables and a tomato condiment, and lamb and fig rissole; mains such as Bresse duckling or grilled fillet of kofar with carrot-saffron. Desserts are a sweet affair with labne Fontainebleau peach and verben.

Wednesday to Sunday (closed on Friday), from QR200 per person. Call +974 4422 4488.

Delicacies from Spain

Try out an authentic Spanish three-course set menu for the X'Press lunch and dinner at Oryx Rotana Doha, as part of the Spanish week at The Cellar promotion. Other restaurants at the hotel are also hosting Spanish-themed promotions during the week.

October 27 to November 8, from QR95 Call +974 4402 3333.



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Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

IN THIS SECTION



* Wholesome, healthy suppers for the family, P24



* Make date night dinners a bit special, P38



* Celebrate Diwali with a traditional Indian menu, P45

Courgette & couscous salad with tahini dressing, recipe p28

Make it tonight, use up tomorrow

These clever recipes make your midweek meal planning a doddle. Cook the 'base' of the meal on Day one, then save some to reuse in an exciting new recipe on Day two. Recipes KATY GREENWOOD Photographs ROB STREETER

10
new
recipes!

Spaghetti
Bolognese
with salami
& basil

DAY ONE**Spaghetti Bolognese with salami & basil**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS

● COOK 45 MINS **Easy** **P****Sauce Only** **Vit C** **1 of 5-a-day**

1 tbsp olive oil
 1 large onion, diced
 1 red pepper, diced
 3 garlic cloves, crushed
 750g beef mince
 4 tbsp tomato purée
 50ml balsamic vinegar
 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
 1 beef stock cube
 75g pork or beef salami, chopped
 400g spaghetti, shredded basil
 leaves and grated Parmesan,
 to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large casserole and cook the onion and pepper for 3-4 mins until beginning to soften. Stir in the garlic, cook for 1 min, then add the mince and cook until browned.
2 Stir in the tomato purée, balsamic vinegar, chopped tomatoes and stock cube. Bring to the boil, turn down to a simmer, put on the lid and cook, stirring every so often, for 20 mins.
3 Remove half the Bolognese, leave to cool, then put in a lidded container and keep in the fridge for tomorrow. Add the chopped salami to the pan and continue to cook. Meanwhile, bring a large pan of water to the boil and cook the pasta following pack instructions. Season the Bolognese mixture, serve with the spaghetti and scatter over the basil and Parmesan.

PER SERVING 718 kcals, protein 38g, carbs 81g, fat 26g, sat fat 10g, fibre 6g, sugar 10g, salt 1.5g

DAY TWO**Speedy beef tacos**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 20

MINS **Easy** **Folate** **Fibre** **Vit C** **3 of 5-a-day**

1 red onion, thinly sliced
 ½ tsp sugar
 100ml cider vinegar
 400g can black beans or kidney beans, drained
 3 tbsp chilli sauce
 Leftover Bolognese (from yesterday)
 8 corn tortillas
 1 Little Gem lettuce, shredded
 1 avocado, stoned, peeled and cut into chunks
 150g pot soured cream

1 Quickly pickle the onion: put it in a bowl and sprinkle with the sugar and ½ tsp salt. Leave for 10 mins, then stir in the cider vinegar and leave to pickle for another 10 mins.

2 Meanwhile, stir the beans and chilli sauce into the Bolognese and heat for 10-15 mins until piping hot. Add a little water if the mixture seems too thick.

3 Heat the corn tortillas following pack instructions. Top with spoonfuls of the Bolognese, some pickled onions, lettuce, avocado and a dollop of soured cream.

PER SERVING 744

kcals, protein 35g,
 carbs 49g, fat 39g, sat
 fat 15g, fibre 7g, sugar
 20g, salt 4.1g >>



DAY ONE

Chinese poached chicken & rice

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 40 MINS **Easy**

Folate Vit C 1 of 5-a-day Good for you

Large piece of ginger, 1 tbsp finely grated, the rest sliced

3 garlic cloves

1 tsp black peppercorns

1 tbsp soy sauce, plus 2-3 tsp (optional)

8 chicken legs

3 tbsp sesame oil

2 bunches spring onions, chopped

4 pak choi, halved

Cooked long-grain rice, to serve

1 Put the sliced ginger, the garlic, peppercorns and half the soy in a large pan with the chicken legs. Add enough water to cover, and season with a little salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce to

a low simmer, put on the lid and poach for 30 mins.

2 Meanwhile, heat a pan and add the sesame oil and spring onions. Soften for 1 min, then remove from the heat and stir in the grated ginger and remaining soy sauce to make a relish.

3 When the chicken is ready, remove from the pan, set aside 4 of the legs and chill for tomorrow. Add the pak choi to the poaching liquid and cook for 3-4 mins. Strain the poaching liquid to remove the ginger, garlic and peppercorns, reserving the liquid. Pull the skin from the remaining 4 chicken legs and discard. Tear the meat into thick pieces. Serve in bowls with rice, the pak choi, a ladle of the hot chicken broth, the spring onion relish and extra soy sauce, if you like.

PER SERVING 317 kcals, protein 30g, carbs 4g, fat 20g, sat fat 5g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 1.1g

DAY TWO

Cold chicken noodle salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 15 MINS **Easy**

4 leftover cooked chicken legs (from yesterday)

400g soba noodles

½ tsp wasabi paste

1½ tbsp soy sauce

3 tbsp sesame oil

Juice of 1 lemon

Good pinch of sugar

1 red chilli, finely chopped

6 spring onions, sliced diagonally

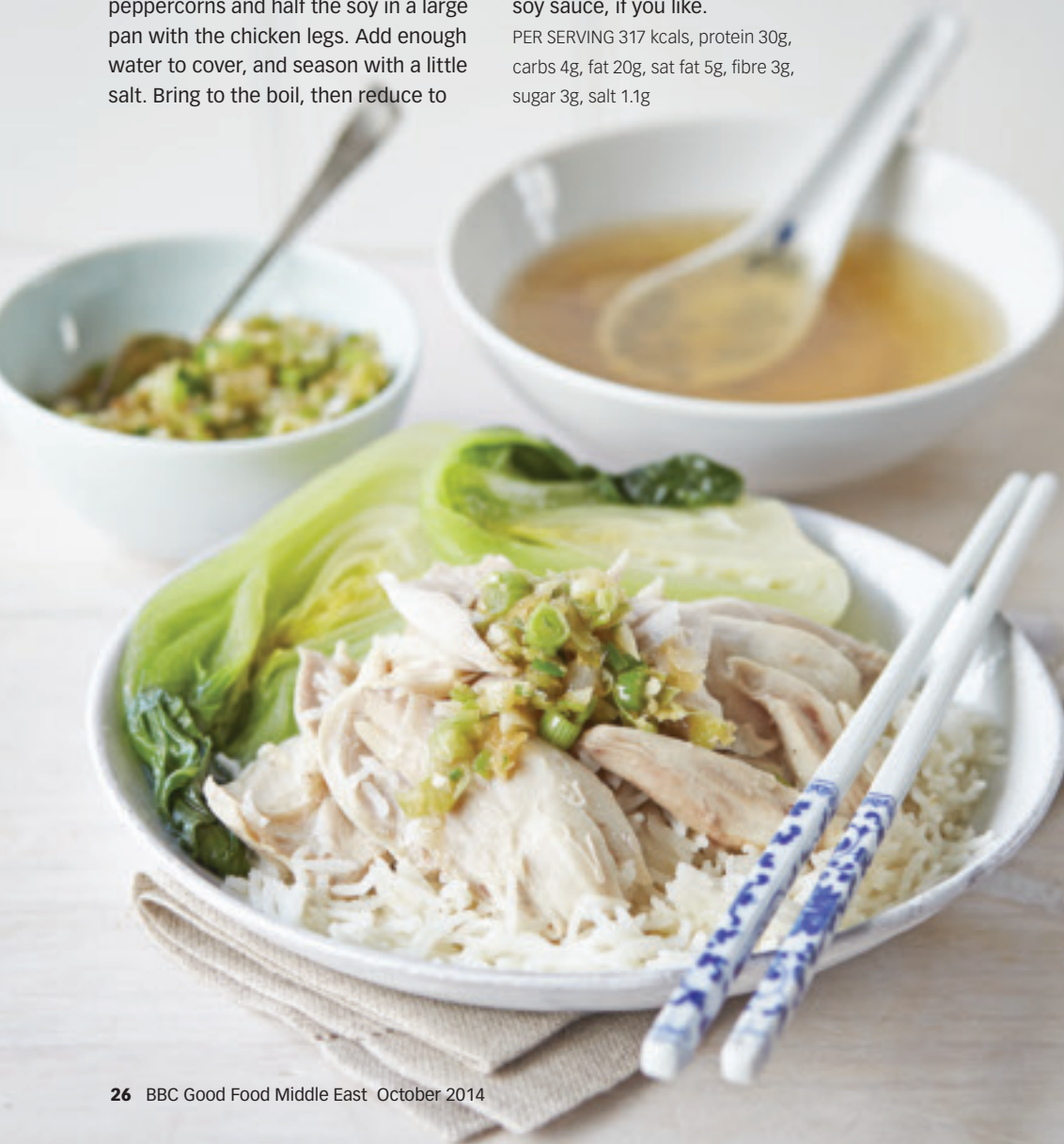
Large pack of coriander, leaves only

1 Shred the meat from the leftover chicken legs, and discard the skin and bones. Bring a pan of water to the boil and cook the noodles following pack instructions. Drain the noodles and cool in cold running water.

2 Mix together the wasabi, soy sauce, sesame oil, lemon juice and sugar until the sugar has dissolved.

3 Toss the cooled noodles with the dressing and arrange on a serving plate. Top with the chicken, chilli, spring onions and coriander. Toss everything through just before serving.

PER SERVING 715 kcals, protein 38g, carbs 74g, fat 30g, sat fat 6g, fibre 3g, sugar 2g, salt 4.1g



**DAY ONE****Griddled lamb with spiced new potatoes**

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS

• COOK 30 MINS **Easy** **Iron** **Gluten Free**

1.5kg new potatoes, halved (or quartered depending on size)
 2 tbsp olive oil
 1 large garlic clove, crushed
 2 preserved lemons, flesh removed and skin finely chopped
 1 heaped tsp cumin seeds, crushed
 8 lamb chops
 Bunch of mint, leaves chopped
 Peas or salad, to serve

1 Put the potatoes in a large pan, cover with water, add a little salt and bring to the boil. Cook for 10-15 mins or until tender. Drain and set aside half for tomorrow. Return the rest of the potatoes to the drained pan with 1 tbsp of the oil, the garlic, preserved lemon and cumin. Keep warm while you cook the lamb.
2 Rub the lamb chops with the remaining oil and season. Heat a griddle pan and cook for 3 mins each side or until cooked to your liking. Season the potatoes and stir in the mint, then serve with the griddled lamb and peas or salad.
 PER SERVING 490 kcals, protein 41g, carbs 33g, fat 22g, sat fat 8g, fibre 3g, sugar 2g, salt 0.4g

**DAY TWO****Smoked mackerel & harissa potato salad**

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS

• NO COOK **Easy** **Folate** **Vit C** **Omega-3** **2 of 5-a-day**

5 tbsp crème fraîche
 1 heaped tbsp harissa
 Juice of ½ lemon
 Cooked potatoes (from yesterday)
 3 large tomatoes, deseeded and diced
 1 red onion, diced

300g smoked mackerel, flaked
 2-3 good handfuls rocket leaves

1 Mix the crème fraîche, harissa and lemon juice, then season to taste.
2 In a large bowl, toss together the potatoes, tomatoes and onion, then stir in the dressing to coat. Scatter with the flaked mackerel and rocket. Stir together before serving.
 PER SERVING 546 kcals, protein 20g, carbs 40g, fat 34g, sat fat 12g, fibre 5g, sugar 8g, salt 1.6g >>



DAY ONE

Indian paneer skewers

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK

15 MINS **Easy**  **V** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day** **Calcium**

Folate **Vit C**

- 4 courgettes
- 450g paneer, each cut into 16 cubes
- 1 small red pepper, deseeded and chopped into large chunks
- 1 small red onion, chopped into large chunks
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2cm piece ginger, finely grated
- Cooked rice or naan and mango chutney, to serve

1 Thickly slice 2 courgettes. Using a peeler (a swivel peeler works well),

thinly slice the remaining 2 lengthways.

- 2** Thread the thick slices of courgette onto skewers, along with the paneer, red pepper and onion. Mix together the curry powder, half the oil, the lemon juice, garlic and ginger, and spoon over the skewers. Leave to marinate until ready to cook, if you have time.
- 3** Heat a large griddle pan, drizzle the thinly sliced courgette with the remaining oil and cook for 1-2 mins on each side until charred. Set aside to cool, then chill for tomorrow.
- 4** Put the prepared skewers on the griddle and cook for about 2 mins on each side, or until tender. Serve with rice or naan and mango chutney.

PER SERVING 557 kcals, protein 29g, carbs 8g, fat 46g, sat fat 22g, fibre 3g, sugar 6g, salt 0.1g



DAY TWO

Courgette & couscous salad with tahini dressing

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● NO COOK

Easy  **V** **Calcium** **Folate** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day**

- 200g couscous
- Zest and juice 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- Griddled courgettes (from yesterday)
- 4 tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 200g pack feta, crumbled
- Small pack mint, leaves picked
- Small pack parsley, leaves picked
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced

- 1** Put the couscous in a heatproof bowl and pour over boiling water to just cover. Cover with cling film and leave to stand for 5 mins.
 - 2** Mix the lemon zest and juice, oil, tahini and garlic, and season to taste. Fluff the prepared couscous and season. Spoon onto a large serving platter and scatter over the courgettes, tomatoes, feta, herbs and chilli. Drizzle over the dressing.
- PER SERVING 445 kcals, protein 18g, carbs 38g, fat 23g, sat fat 9g, fibre 6g, sugar 5g, salt 1.9g

DAY ONE**Roast pepper
& chorizo salad**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS

● COOK 1 HR 10 MINS **Easy**  **Fibre** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day** 

8 red peppers (or mixed peppers)
2 tbsp olive oil
8 garlic cloves, 6 unpeeled, 2 peeled and thinly sliced
225g chorizo ring, sliced
1 tsp smoked paprika
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 tbsp Sherry vinegar
4 eggs
Large handful of rocket leaves
Crusty bread, to serve (optional)

1 Heat oven to 200C. Rub the peppers with 1 tbsp of the oil, then roast in the oven with the 6 unpeeled garlic cloves for 40-45 mins until soft. Put the peppers in a bowl, cover with cling

film and leave to steam for 10 mins until cool enough to handle. Remove the stalks and seeds from the peppers, peel and discard the skin.

2 Put 4 peppers and the garlic in a container and chill for tomorrow's dinner (if you have different coloured peppers, then keep 4 red ones for tomorrow), and tear the remaining peppers into chunks.

3 Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan. Fry the chorizo for a couple of mins until the oils start to leak into the pan. Stir in the sliced garlic and the paprika, cook for 1 min, then add the chickpeas and cook for a further 3-4 mins. Splash in the vinegar and add the torn peppers. Remove from the heat and season.

4 Poach the eggs. Toss the rocket with the chickpea mix and divide between 4 plates. Top each with a poached egg and serve with crusty bread, if you like.

PER SERVING 410 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 33g, fat 21g, sat fat 7g, fibre 11g, sugar 13g, salt 1.5g

**DAY TWO****Roast pepper pesto
with pasta**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 15 MINS **Easy**  **Fibre** **Vit C** **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

6 roasted garlic cloves
(from yesterday)
4 roasted red peppers
(from yesterday)
1 tsp cayenne pepper
75g blanched almonds,
roughly chopped
50g Parmesan (or vegetarian
alternative), roughly chopped,
plus extra for serving (optional)
2 tbsp olive oil
400g pasta (we used tripolini)
A large pack of basil leaves

1 Remove the skin from the roasted garlic cloves. In the small bowl of a food processor, whizz the roasted peppers, garlic, cayenne, almonds, Parmesan and oil until it makes a rough pesto consistency. Taste and season.

2 Bring a pan of water to the boil and cook the pasta following pack instructions. Drain, reserving a little cooking water. Return the pasta to the pan with the pesto, basil and a little of the cooking water, then heat through. Serve with extra Parmesan, if you like.

PER SERVING 636 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 84g, fat 23g, sat fat 5g, fibre 8g, sugar 13g, salt 0.3g **GF**



Chicken, red pepper & almond traybake

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 40 MINS **Easy**

Vit C **2 of 5-a-day** **Good for you** **Gluten Free**

500g boneless, skinless chicken thighs

3 medium red onions, cut into thick wedges

500g small red potatoes, cut into thick slices

2 red peppers, deseeded and cut into thick slices

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 tsp each ground cumin, smoked paprika and fennel seeds, slightly crushed

3 tbsp olive oil

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

50g whole blanched almonds, roughly chopped

170g 0% Greek yoghurt, to serve

Small handful of parsley or coriander, chopped, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the chicken, onions, potatoes, peppers and seasoning in a large bowl. In another bowl, mix together the garlic, spices, oil, and lemon zest and juice. Pour this over everything and spread the mixture between 2 baking trays.

2 Roast for 40 mins, turning over after 20 mins, until the chicken is cooked through. Add the almonds for the final 8 mins of cooking. Serve in bowls with a dollop of Greek yoghurt and some chopped parsley or coriander.

PER SERVING 442 kcals, protein 34g, carbs 34g, fat 20g, sat fat 3g, fibre 5g, sugar 11g, salt 0.34g

Food that's Good for you!

Simple, satisfying dishes to keep you on track.



Herbed lamb cutlets with roasted veg

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 45 MINS **Easy** **Fibre** **Vit C** **3 of 5-a-day** **Gluten Free**

- 2 peppers, any colour, deseeded and cut into chunky pieces
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into chunky pieces
- 2 courgettes, sliced into chunks
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 8 lean lamb cutlets
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves, chopped
- 2 tbsp mint leaves, chopped

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Put the peppers, sweet potato, courgettes and onion on a large baking tray and drizzle with oil. Season with black pepper. Roast for 25 mins.

2 Meanwhile, trim the lamb of as much fat as possible. Mix the herbs with a few twists of black pepper and pat all over the lamb.

3 Take the vegetables out of the oven, turn over and push to one side of the tray. Place the cutlets on the hot tray and return to the oven for 10 mins.

4 Turn the cutlets and cook for a further 10 mins or until the vegetables and lamb are tender and lightly charred. Mix everything on the tray and serve.

PER SERVING 429 kcs, protein 19g, carbs 23g, fat 29g, sat fat 13g, fibre 6g, sugar 12g, salt 0.2g

Easy paella

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 30 MINS **Easy** **Low fat** **Gluten Free**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tsp each hot smoked paprika and dried thyme
- 300g paella or risotto rice
- 400g can chopped tomatoes with garlic
- 850ml chicken stock (or gluten-free alternative)
- 400g bag frozen seafood mix
- Juice ½ lemon, other ½ cut into wedges
- Handful of flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add the onion and soften for 5 mins. Stir in the paprika, thyme and rice, stir for 1 min. Once it has evaporated, stir in the tomatoes and stock. Season and cook, uncovered, for about 15 mins, stirring now and again, until the rice is almost tender and still surrounded by some liquid.

2 Stir the frozen seafood into the pan and cover with a lid. Simmer for 5 mins or until the prawns are cooked through and the rice is tender. Squeeze over the lemon juice, scatter with parsley and serve with extra lemon wedges.

PER SERVING 431 kcs, protein 34g, carbs 66g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 5g, salt 2.14g >>





Pollack & beetroot traybake with lemony crème fraîche

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 45 MINS

Easy **Low cal** **Folate** **Gluten Free**

4 potatoes, sliced
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed
4 beetroots, peeled and cut into wedges
4 pollack fillets (can be substituted with cod or any other firm white fish)
Zest of ½ a lemon
4 tbsp half-fat crème fraîche
Small handful of basil, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the

potatoes on a large baking tray, and toss with the olive oil and fennel seeds. Season, arrange in a single layer, then bake for 20 mins until softened and starting to crisp.

2 Turn the potatoes over and add the beetroot, season and return to the oven for 15 mins. Place the fish in the centre, season well and rub over a little oil from the tray. Return to the oven for 10 mins more.

3 Meanwhile, sprinkle the lemon zest over the crème fraîche with a good grind of black pepper. Scatter the fish with basil and serve the lemony crème fraîche on the side.

PER SERVING 336 kcals, protein 26g, carbs 31g, fat 12g, sat fat 6g, fibre 3g, sugar 4g, salt 0.4g



Pork with apples & mustard

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 35

MINS **Easy** **P** **Low fat** **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

1 tbsp olive oil
3 eating apples
500g pork fillets, sliced into medallions
200ml reduced-salt chicken stock
1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
1 tbsp sage leaves, chopped
2 tbsp half-fat crème fraîche
Mashed potato, to serve

1 Heat half the oil in a large frying pan. Core and cut the apples into wedges, then cook for about 10 mins until caramelised and softened. Remove from the pan and set aside. Heat the remaining oil. Fry the pork on each side for 2 mins. Add the stock and mustard to the pan, then bubble for 5 mins or until the pork is cooked through. Return the apples to the pan with the sage and cook for 1 min more.

2 Remove from the heat and stir in the crème fraîche and some seasoning. Serve with mashed potato.

PER SERVING 246 kcals, protein 28g, carbs 12g, fat 10g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 11g, salt 0.39g **GF**



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spinneys FOOD

Good in every way

5 healthy sides

Make barbecues and roasts more interesting with these delicious and good-for-you ideas. Recipes EMILY KYDD Photograph LARA HOLMES

Skinny carrot fries

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 45 MINS

Easy Low fat 1 of 5-a-day

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Cut **500g carrots** into 'fries', about 1cm thick, and mix with **1 tbsp cornflour** and a **little black pepper**. Toss with **1 tbsp vegetable oil**, spread in a single layer on a baking tray lined with parchment, and bake for 40-45 mins, turning halfway. Mix a **little salt** with **1 tsp finely chopped tarragon** and toss through the cooked fries.

PER SERVING 164 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 25g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 8g, sugar 18g, salt 0.4g

Asparagus with lemon & hazelnut crumbs

SERVES 3 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 5 MINS

Easy Low fat 1 of 5-a-day

Combine **25g fresh breadcrumbs**, **25g chopped hazelnuts**, **zest ½ lemon** and season. Heat **1 tbsp olive oil** in a frying pan and cook the crumb mixture until golden and crispy. Slice **350g asparagus** spears into 2-3cm pieces. Cook in boiling salted water for 2 mins until tender, but still crunchy. Drain, then toss with a **drizzle olive oil**, a squeeze of **lemon juice** and seasoning. Transfer the asparagus to a serving bowl, top with the crumbs and **1 tbsp chopped dill**.

PER SERVING 156 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 8g, fat 11g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 2g, salt 0.3g

Super-healthy salad

SERVES 2 • PREP 10 MINS • NO COOK

Easy 3 of 5-a-day

Mix **1 large handful of rocket**, **1 large handful of pea shoots** and **2 Little Gem** or

cos lettuce hearts cut into 8 wedges. Toss with **3 sliced spring onions**, **85g sliced radishes** and a **handful sultanas** or **raisins**.

Make a dressing by combining **1½ tbsp olive oil**, **1 tsp lemon juice**, **¼ tsp Dijon mustard** and seasoning. Toss the dressing through the salad and scatter over **1 tbsp mixed seeds**.

PER SERVING 203 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 16g, fat 14g, sat fat 2g, fibre 5g, sugar 15g, salt 0.1g

Jersey Royals with watercress & walnut pesto

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS

• COOK 15 MINS

Easy Low fat

Cook **500g Jersey Royal potatoes** in salted boiling water for 10-15 mins or until tender. Meanwhile, blend together **50g watercress**, **1 small crushed garlic clove**, **20g walnut halves** and **1½ tbsp olive oil** in a food processor (or chop finely) to make a pesto. Add 1-2 tbsp water to loosen, if needed, then season.

Drain the potatoes and, while still warm, transfer to a bowl, then crush very lightly with a fork. Stir through the pesto and a handful more of **watercress** to serve.

PER SERVING 159 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 18g, fat 8g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 1g, salt 0.1g

Creamy peas & beans with mint

SERVES 3 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 6 MINS

Easy Low fat 1 of 5-a-day

Cook **125g peas** and **125g broad beans** (fresh or frozen) in a pan of boiling water for 3 mins, drain and rinse under cold water. Peel the beans, if you like.

Heat a drizzle of **olive oil** in a pan, add **2 finely sliced shallots** and cook gently for 2 mins. Add in **1 crushed garlic clove** and **½ tsp ground cumin** and cook for 30 secs more. Add the peas and beans, then stir in **3 tbsp half-fat crème fraîche** and gently warm through. Remove from the heat, season and scatter over **1 tbsp chopped mint**.

PER SERVING 103 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 10g, fat 4g, sat fat 2g, fibre 6g, sugar 2g, salt none

Skinny carrot fries



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Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice, cooking tips and product picks for your pantry.

Trending now

Coffee flour



This gluten-free product is made from grinding the dried pulp of coffee cherries – which is also the wasted part which covers the coffee bean. It has five times more fibre than whole grain wheat flour, with three times more protein compared to kale, and tastes like dried fruit. It's getting popular in the US at the moment and we can't wait to get some of it here in the region!

Ingredients cheat-sheet

Not sure which aromatics to use for a specific dish? Here's an easy guide to follow.

For a curry: Ginger, garlic, ground coriander, ground cumin and turmeric.

For a casserole: Garlic, thyme, and tomato paste.

For a stir-fry: Soy sauce, broth, rice vinegar, hoisin sauce, oyster sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and/or lemon juice.



Health update> ADD SOME FLAKES

Nutritional yeast has been receiving rave reviews lately, as it is filled with goodness. The flakes are on most vegan and vegetarian people's list of top food to eat as they are gluten-free, not derived from any animal product, and are a great source of protein, fibre, minerals such as zinc, magnesium, copper and Vitamin B. It has a pungent cheese-like taste and can be eaten mixed with scrambled eggs, stirred into a dairy-free cream sauce, or even sprinkled over popcorn and blended with gravies. Available at health food stores.

Look what we found!

3 great new products for your kitchen



This Lussory Gold non-alcoholic wine is ideal for mocktails that need a touch of fizz – and it has 24-carat edible gold leaf too! Dhs550 at Bystro and Lafayette Gourmet.

Tuck into this dairy-free Coco Yogo coconut yoghurt in strawberry, mango, chocolate and vanilla flavours for a guilt-free treat. From Dhs20 at Biorganic.



We will be waking up every morning with Nespresso's latest coffee, Cubania, which has a rich, creamy texture and flavour. Dhs30 per sleeve at Nespresso boutiques.



Reader tip of the month



To peel the skin off garlic cloves easily, boil it for 30 seconds.

- Stacey McCormick



Got a great tip you want to share?
Get in touch with us on facebook or twitter



SMART FOOD SWAPS



514
calories

5 fried and floured chicken wings (with skin)



285
calories

150g chilli con carne with small baked potato

Swap for



75
calories

100g steamed fish balls



238
calories

200g grilled shrimp

Making homemade easier!

If we had it our way, we would love for someone to buy groceries and research nutritious recipes for us to cook every day! Luckily for people like us, Slice and Dice, a new recipe box supplier have just launched in Dubai. Each box comes complete with recipes for four meals and locally sourced ingredients from Ripe, with all dishes taking just 30 minutes to prepare and cook – ideal for those pressed for time, or looking to eat sustainably. Look out for Paleo and juicing packages coming out soon! Packages from Dhs290 (four meals for two people). Visit sliceanddice.me.



Just for two

Make
date-night
special!

When there's only two, the cooking is easier and you can afford to be more extravagant with the ingredients. So set the table and enjoy one of these restaurant-quality main courses at home.

Recipes Sara Buenfeld

Photographs Philip Webb

Fettuccine with seared scallops & prosciutto

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK

5-10 MINS    

Choose big fat scallops with corals for this speedy but smart recipe. You have to be careful not to overcook scallops, but their prosciutto wrappers will protect them, as well as adding an extra savoury hit. Don't be tempted to up the amount of thyme or it will overpower the other flavours.

6 scallops with corals

6 slices prosciutto, halved lengthways

175g fresh egg fettuccine or tagliatelle

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (optional)

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

¼ tsp thyme leaves

Zest of 1 lemon and juice of ½

4 tbsp dry white vermouth

Good handful of chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Cut the orange corals from the scallops and finely chop them. Halve the white scallops to make 2 fat pieces and roll them up in the strips of prosciutto.

2 Cook the pasta in salted water following pack instructions – it should only take about 4 mins. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large, deep sauté pan and sear the scallops for 1-2 mins, to brown the prosciutto and lightly cook the scallop inside. Lift from the pan onto a warm plate and leave to rest.

3 Add the garlic to the pan juices and fry, stirring, until golden. Tip in the chopped corals and thyme, and stir-fry for a few mins more. Add the lemon zest, juice and vermouth, let it bubble down to at least half, then toss in the parsley. Drain the pasta and add to the pan with salt and plenty of black pepper, then toss to make sure the strands are well coated. Add the prosciutto-wrapped scallops and serve drizzled with a little extra oil, if you like.

PER SERVING 664 kcals, protein 45g, carbs 50g, fat 28g, sat fat 5g, fibre 1g, sugar 2g, salt 3.1g

**Lebanese poussin with
spiced aubergine pilaf**

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS

● COOK 45 MINS **A little effort** 🍴

Iron 3 of 5-a-day Gluten Free

1 aubergine, roughly diced
 1 tbsp olive oil, plus a bit extra
 2 small poussins (baby chickens)
 ¼ tsp allspice, plus 2 good pinches
 2 bay leaves
 1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
 100g basmati rice
 2 tbsp pine nuts
 ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 Good pinch of ground cloves
 200ml hot chicken stock
 (or gluten-free alternative)
 2 tbsp currants
 1 large tomato, chopped
 1 tbsp each chopped mint and dill, plus a few leaves and sprigs to serve
 2 tbsp pomegranate molasses
 Sumac, for sprinkling (optional)

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the aubergine in 1 tbsp of the oil until well coated. Pour into a large roasting tin, then push to the sides of the tin to make a space for the poussins. Rub some oil onto the skin of the poussins, sprinkle with the pinches of allspice, salt and lots of black pepper, pop a bay leaf inside each bird, then roast for 35 mins. (Leave to cook for about 10 mins before you start the pilaf so they are ready at the same time.)

2 To make the pilaf, heat the

remaining 1 tbsp oil in a medium pan and fry the onion for 5-8 mins until golden. Tip in the rice and pine nuts, stir for about 1 min, then add the spices, including the ¼ tsp allspice. Pour in the stock, stir in the currants, then cover the pan and cook for 7 mins.

3 Take the lid off the pan, add the tomato, mint and dill, then cover and cook 2-3 mins more until the stock has been absorbed and the rice is tender. Set aside, covered, to keep warm.

4 Meanwhile, once the poussins

have had their 35 mins, drizzle the pomegranate molasses over them and return them to the oven for 10 mins more until they and the aubergines are tender.

5 Set the poussins aside to rest for a few mins while you toss the aubergine into the pilaf. Serve the poussins whole, or portion and serve on top of the pilaf. Scatter with the dill and mint leaves, and sprinkle with a little sumac, if you like.

PER SERVING 908 kcals, protein 62g, carbs 59g, fat 42g, sat fat 9g, fibre 6g, sugar 20g, salt 0.9g >>



Pan-fried venison with sloe gin & plum sauce

SERVES 2 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 20 MINS **Easy**  

Low fat **Iron** **1 of 5-a-day** **Gluten Free** 

6 juniper berries, finely chopped
2 venison steaks
15g butter
3 plums, 2 quartered, 1 finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
3 tbsp sloe gin, or 2 tbsp Port
125ml hot beef stock made with 1 tbsp liquid beef stock (or gluten-free alternative)

Thyme sprigs
Wilted spinach, to serve (optional)

1 Press the juniper and lots of black pepper onto the steaks. Heat the butter in a frying pan until foaming, add the plum quarters and the steaks. Cook to your liking, turning halfway through. Remove and keep warm.

2 Tip the chopped plum and garlic into the pan juices and cook, stirring, until softened. Pour in the sloe gin, allow to sizzle, then add the hot stock. When the plums are really soft, press the mixture through a sieve to remove the skins. Try to get as much pulp through as you can,

as this will add flavour and body to the sauce. If it's too thick, add a dash of boiling water.

3 Put the steaks on warmed plates, top with the plum quarters and spoon round some sauce. Scatter over the thyme and a little black pepper. Serve with Fennel Dauphinoise and wilted spinach.

PER SERVING 330 kcals, protein 40g, carbs 8g, fat 9g, sat fat 5g, fibre 2g, sugar 7g, salt 0.4g

Serve with



Fennel Dauphinoise

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 1 HR **Easy**   

Calcium **Gluten Free**

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Put **225g very thinly sliced medium-sized potatoes**, **1 small sliced fennel bulb** (fronds reserved), and **1 finely chopped garlic clove** in a medium non-stick pan. Pour in **75ml whole milk** and **100ml double cream**, season well and simmer gently, covered, for 10 mins, stirring halfway through, until potatoes are just tender.

Divide the mixture between **2 small (about 150ml) buttered ramekins** and scatter with **2 tbsp finely grated Parmesan** (or vegetarian alternative). Bake for 40 mins until the potatoes are golden and tender when pierced with a knife. Snip the reserved fennel fronds over before serving.

PER SERVING 432 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 22g, fat 33g, sat fat 21g, fibre 5g, sugar none, salt 0.4g **GF**



Roasted red peppers



Paprika chicken skewers



Flatbreads



Hummous

Advertising feature

Paprika chicken skewers

Serves: 6
Prep: 5 mins
Cook: 5 mins

INGREDIENTS
2 tbsp paprika
Juice of ½ a lemon
1 tbsp olive oil
2 skinless chicken breasts

METHOD

- 1 Blend the paprika, lemon and olive oil together in a blender with the chopper/grinder attachment on high speed until it becomes a paste.
- 2 Finely slice the chicken breast, lengthways, season well and spread the paste over.
- 3 Slide onto skewers and grill on a high heat for a few mins on each side until cooked through.



Roasted red peppers

Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins
Cook: 30 mins

INGREDIENTS
4 red peppers
2 aubergines
Leaves from 1 sprig of rosemary, finely chopped
1 tsp olive oil, plus some more for finishing
2 spring onions, sliced
1 tsp smoked paprika
Zest of 1 lemon

METHOD

- 1 Thickly slice the peppers and aubergine (you can do this with the slicer attachment of the food processor), and place on a baking tray.
- 2 Drizzle oil over the top and roast in the oven for 30 mins, then set aside to cool.
- 3 Add the chopped rosemary, a splash of olive oil, the spring onions, smoked paprika and lemon zest to the roasted red peppers and aubergine, and chop finely using a chopper on high speed (knife blade attachment) until it becomes a paste.






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Advertising feature

Hummous

Serves: 6
Prep: 10 mins No cook

INGREDIENTS
1 tin of chickpeas
2 tbsp tahini paste
1 garlic clove
A squeeze of lemon juice
1 tbsp ground cumin
100ml olive oil, plus some more for garnish
Salt, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Mix the chickpeas, tahini paste, garlic, lemon juice, ground cumin and olive oil together in a food processor with the knife blade, on medium speed, until you have a smooth paste.
- 2 Drizzle some more olive oil over and serve.



Flatbreads

Serves: 6
Prep: 5 mins plus 15 mins for resting
Cook: 5 mins

INGREDIENTS
300g strong bread flour
½ tsp smoked paprika
Olive oil
125ml water
Salt, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Add all the ingredients into your kitchen machine with attachment for making dough.
- 2 Knead the mixture together for 5 mins on low speed, until you have a smooth dough. You can add more water or flour if necessary. Remove the bowl and cover with cling film, leave to rest for 15 mins.
- 3 Lightly flour a work surface and remove the dough from the bowl. Divide into 6 equal balls and roll them out into a circle about 1/2cm thick.
- 4 Heat a griddle pan and cook for about 2 mins on each side.






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DUBAI FESTIVAL CITY



Learn to: Butcher a tenderloin



Master your meat skills with this step-by-step guide from Jamie Robertson, head chef of Gaucho Dubai, and then cook up a delicious Argentinian recipe with a prime cut.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Jamie Robertson, head chef of Gaucho Dubai, began his culinary career in 2003 at The Living Room restaurant in Edinburgh. He moved up the ranks within four years, and then moved on to revamp and win accolades for Alma De Cuba, an independent restaurant in Liverpool. There he caught the attention of Jamie Oliver, who recruited him for his restaurant in Dubai. He joined Gaucho in 2012.

Churrasco de Lomo with garlic hollandaise sauce and humita

SERVES 1 • PREP 12 MINS,
PLUS 24-48 HRS MARINATING TIME

• COOK 20 MINS **Easy**

5g garlic, finely chopped
8g parsley, finely chopped
50ml corn oil

1 churrasco steak (around 400g)

FOR THE SMOKED GARLIC HOLLANDAISE

1 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
63g butter, melted
10ml olive oil

1 egg yolk

2ml white vinegar

Juice of ¼ of a lemon

½ tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp chives, chopped

FOR THE HUMITA SALTENA (STEWED CORN)

15g butter

½ Spanish onion, chopped

125g sweetcorn kernels

9g caster sugar

4g corn flour

25g butternut squash or pumpkin

A pinch of salt

A pinch of pepper

1 Mix the garlic, parsley and oil to make the marinade. Marinate the churrasco in this mixture for 24-48 hrs.

2 Cook on a hot griddle pan for 2 mins on each side for medium rare temperature.

3 Blend the garlic, butter and cloves with olive oil, until smooth.

4 Whisk the egg yolks, vinegar and lemon juice in a metal bowl over a pan of simmering water, until the yolks double in size and begin to stiffen. Gradually add the butter mixture, whisking until incorporated. Add the smoked paprika and whisk with the chives.

5 Melt the butter on a large pan. Add the onions, reduce the heat and cook until translucent. Add the sweetcorn, sugar and corn flour and combine. Cook for a few mins, or until the flour starts to thicken. Season with salt and pepper.

6 Peel and cut the pumpkin into 2cm chunks and roast for 10mins at 170C until soft. Pulse together the pumpkin and corn mixture until combined with some texture – don't blend it.

7 Serve the churrasco with hollandaise and corn on the side (you could serve the corn in the husk as well).

PER SERVING 1,066 kcs, protein 35g, carbs 40g, fat 88g, sat fat 45g, fibre 13g, sugar 6g, salt 1g.



1 The tenderloin has two ends – a head (the large part) and tail (tapers to the end). Lift the flap, point the knife blade at a 30 degree angle, apply a little pressure and run the knife down to scrape off the fat and top of the silver skin – it won't all come off at once.



2 There are two flaps on either side – one larger than the other – attached by a thin seam of muscle. Remove the flap near the head by placing the blade of the knife under the flap and cutting it off slowly. Scrape away the fat, if any.



3 The silver skin will be completely visible from head to tail. Place the blade under the skin near the head, and remove half way through by applying pressure (don't cut into the tenderloin).



4 To remove the rest of the silver skin, slide the knife under the skin, and with the blade angled upwards, cut towards you by holding the skin tightly and pushing the blade down against the meat to the tail end. The smaller flap (near the tail) can be pulled away with your fingers.



5 Divide the tenderloin into various parts starting with the sirloin (churrasco) which should be about 400g, which is the head end.



6 Section two small portions of medallions from the middle of the tenderloin, according to the size you prefer. Cut a large portion for the chateaubriand from the centre as well (closer to the tail).



7 To prepare the sirloin for churrasco, butterfly the meat by making two vertical slits spaced about 5cm apart.



8 Slice horizontally all the way through the middle – make sure not to cut through the meat.



9 Lay the thick piece flat down and slice horizontally again all the way through, so that it becomes one long flat piece. [GF](#)

TIP The tail part is best used sliced up for steak sandwiches.



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Cook up a delicious Diwali dinner

When it comes to a festive Indian meal, who better to turn to than the reigning *BBC Good Food ME* Chef of the Year award-winner, Amrish Sood from Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar, JW Marriott Marquis Dubai? He shares a home-style vegetarian menu exclusively with us.

Photographs
AVI CHATERJEE

Saboo dana ki
tikki, recipe p46



Amrish Sood started his career as a chef when he began training in 2001 in Fire and Agni, New Delhi, India, after

studying hotel management in Bangalore. He then worked in other restaurants in Delhi and Abu Dhabi, before gaining hands-on experience from celebrity chef Atul Kochhar at Benares, London. He is now at the helm of the kitchen at Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar, JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, where he showcases his talent by combining modern techniques with traditional Indian recipes.



Saboo dana ki tikki (Crisp sago cutlets)

SERVES 6 (18 PCS)

● PREP 25 MINS ●

COOK 10 MINS **Easy**

This dish is widely eaten for Diwali breakfast too.

250g saboo dana (sago seeds)
400g medium-

sized potatoes, boiled

5 tbsp crushed peanuts

20g coriander, chopped

4 tbsp ginger, chopped

1 green chilli, chopped

3 tsp cumin seeds, toasted and

crushed

A pinch of salt, to taste

1.5l oil, for deep frying

60g radish, finely sliced

50g boiled beetroot, cubed

15g shiso leaves

FOR YOGHURT CUCUMBER RELISH

250g thick yoghurt

200g cucumber, grated

3 tbsp peanut powder

1 tbsp sugar

A pinch of salt

1 Wash sago seeds and soak in water for 4 hrs.

2 In a mixing bowl, grate the boiled potatoes and add in the crushed peanuts, coriander, ginger, green chilli, cumin seeds and salt. Gently squeeze the soaked sago seeds and add to the potatoes. Mix well and divide the mixture into 18 equal portions – approximately 30g each. Shape to make round flat patties and refrigerate for 45mins. Deep fry these in medium-hot oil until crisp and golden.

3 To make the relish, whisk the yoghurt and squeeze the grated cucumber before adding it in. Add the peanut powder, sugar and salt and mix well.

4 Serve the tikkies with the yoghurt and cucumber chutney on top and the side. Garnish with the radish, shiso leaves, and beetroot before serving.

PER SERVING 395 kcals, protein 9g, carbs 60g, fat 14.8g, sat fat 0g, fibre 4g, sugar 6.5g, salt 0.4g



Chana masala (White chickpea cassoulet)

SERVES 6 ● PREP 30 MINS

● COOK 2 HRS **Easy**

250g white chickpeas

6 black cardamoms

350g medium-sized onions,
cut into 4 pcs

20g black tea leaves
(tied in a cheese cloth)

1 tsp salt

½ tsp baking soda

150ml vegetable oil

3 tbsp coriander powder

3 tsp ajwain (carom) seeds

75g ginger garlic paste

700g fresh tomato purée

150g tamarind pulp

50ml lemon juice

1 tbsp of the home-ground garam
masala spice mix (see box-out)

30g fresh coriander

1 onion, cut to rounds

1 Soak the chickpeas overnight in a large container.

2 Boil the chickpeas in the same water along with black cardamom, onions, black tea leaves, salt and baking soda. Cook covered on low heat until soft; add water in between if required (avoid stirring the chickpeas while cooking).

3 In a separate pot, heat the vegetable

oil and sauté the ajwain seeds, ginger-garlic paste and coriander powder, followed by the tomato purée. Cook until it thickens. Transfer the cooked tomato masala to the boiled chickpeas and add the tamarind pulp. Cook on low heat and discard the tea leaves from the chana masala. Adjust the seasoning with lemon juice and salt, and then add 1 tbsp of the garam masala mix. Mix gently and sprinkle the fresh coriander and onions on top. Cover and set aside for 10 mins before serving. Cover the pot and rest the chana masala for 10 mins before serving with white rice or roti.

PER SERVING 513 kcals, protein 12.3g, carbs 58g, fat 26g, sat fat 0g, fibre 12.5g, sugar 24g, salt 1.8g

MASALA MIX

To make your own garam masala spice mix, gently toast **75g coriander seeds, 10g dry whole chilli (de-seeded), 20g whole cumin, 1 (1 in) cinnamon stick, 1 tsp cloves, 1 pc mace, and 2 tsp black peppercorns** in a thick-bottom pan on low heat for 8-10 mins. Blend or grind to make a fine powder. The rest of the spice mix can be stored in an air-tight container for up to 4 weeks.

Shahi paneer (Cottage cheese and lotus seeds in tomato and cashew sauce)

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 45 MINS **Easy**

20g lotus seeds (fox nuts) –
available in specialty stores

175ml vegetable oil

2 tsp cumin seeds

350g onions, chopped

3 tbsp ginger garlic paste

700g tomatoes, chopped

½ tsp turmeric

½ tbsp coriander powder

½ tsp desiccated coconut

40g cashew nuts

8 green cardamoms

1 tbsp sesame seeds

150ml milk

½l water

350g paneer (cottage cheese), diced

A pinch of salt

50ml lemon juice

30g coriander, chopped

5g fenugreek leaves, crushed

1 tsp cumin powder

3 tbsp ghee

1 Heat vegetable oil in a pan and fry the lotus seeds until crisp. Remove and set aside.

2 Cook the onions and cumin seeds until the onions become golden brown. Add the ginger garlic paste followed by the tomatoes, and after a few minutes add the coriander and turmeric powder – continue cooking until the mix becomes thick in texture.

3 In a separate bowl, soak the sliced desiccated coconut, cashew nuts, green cardamom, sesame seeds and

warm milk for 30 mins. Grind to make a thin purée. Add this to the onion masala mixture, followed by the water. Boil this curry and simmer on low heat. Add the paneer and toasted lotus seeds and mix gently. Simmer for another 5 mins and adjust the seasoning with salt, lemon juice, fresh coriander, crushed fenugreek leaves and cumin powder. Add the ghee and cover the pot for 10 mins before serving. Serve with white rice or roti.

PER SERVING 395 kcals, protein 15.5g, carbs 16.8g, fat 27.8g, sat fat 15.4g, fibre 3g, sugar 8g, salt 0.22g >>





“This dish is very nostalgic for me, I remember it from my school days, when I used to go to my friend’s house to celebrate Diwali together in the evening.”

- Amrish Sood

Gajar Ka Halwa (Carrot Pudding with toasted nuts and carrot ginger sauce)

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 25 MINS **Easy**

This can be prepared a day before, and is a popular dessert in North India during the winter months.

1.2kg carrots, grated
600ml full cream milk
8-10 green cardamoms (only the seeds)
170g sugar
100g ghee
2 tbsp almonds, sliced
½ tbsp pistachios

3 tbsp cashew nuts
2 tbsp raisins
3 edible silver leaves (available at select supermarkets)

FOR THE CARROT AND GINGER SAUCE

150g carrots, sliced
200ml water
75g sugar
30g soft butter
20ml lemon juice
30g gresh ginger, grated

1 Sweat the grated carrot in a heavy bottomed pot. Pour in the milk along with the green cardamom seeds, and cover to allow the carrots to cook.
2 Once the carrots have softened,

remove the lid and allow the excess moisture to evaporate, gently stirring the mixture. Stir in the sugar and continue to cook on low heat, until the moisture dries up.

3 To make the sauce, boil the carrots and ginger until soft, then add the butter, followed by the sugar. Blend to make a fine purée and add lemon juice.

4 Heat the ghee and fry the sliced almonds, pistachios, cashew nuts and raisins. Mix this into the carrot halwa. Serve hot, with the sauce and garnished with the silver leaf.

PER SERVING 560 kJ, protein 6.5g, carbs 73.5g, fat 12.8g, sat fat 6.2g, fibre 6.8g, sugar 18g, salt 0.5g **GF**

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THE OLD TOWN

AT DOWNTOWN DUBAI



Welcome to our cake cupboard!

We are celebrating our seventh birthday with seven of our favourite home-grown foodie entrepreneurs who have each created a special birthday cake for US. Photographs NEIL WALTON

Meet the bakers

Deema Dajani: Dulce D bakery

Noëlle El Saadany and Amira Ibrahim:
Bare Dubai

Ola Sinno: Spill the Bean Café

Sidiqa Sohail: Spontiphoria

Ravisha and Sneha Bhatia: Sugaholic Bakery

Turner Francis: CocoYogo

Yana Kalwani: Pantry Café

Location courtesy: Sauce on the sea (04-4304202).

Props from: Marina Home, Bloomingdale's Homes and Sauce Gifts.

Sidiqa Sohail

Noëlle El Saadany

Yana Kalwani

Amira Ibrahim

Ravisha Bhatia

Sneha Bhatia

Turner Francis

Deema Dajani

Ola Sinno

Loves
cookies!



Deema Dajani,
founder of Dulce
D bakery

Deema was born and
bred in Washington

D.C., but is of Palestinian origin. Deema had
always been fond of baking and decided to
turn her talent into a career after getting
married, by starting to take private orders
for celebration cakes in 2012. She has
since sold her creations at various markets
and collaborated with different brands for
events and special promotions, under the
Dulce D name (050-7058458).

Victorian sponge cake filled with fresh berries and cream

MAKE 1 (20CM) CAKE ● PREP 10-15 MINS ●
COOK 20-30 MINS **Easy**

250g unsalted butter (softened)

250g caster sugar

250g self-raising flour

2¼ tsp baking powder

4 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla

FOR THE FILLING AND TOPPING

5 tbsp homemade strawberry jam (see
recipe below)

200ml whipping cream

A handful of blueberries, strawberries,
raspberries and blackberries

1 Preheat your oven to 180C.

2 Grease two 8-inch pans and parchment
paper with butter and place the baking paper
in the pan.

3 In a large mixing bowl, mix the butter and
caster sugar on low speed for 2 mins, until it is
light and fluffy. Add the flour and baking
powder and mix, followed by the eggs one at
a time – mix after each addition. Add the vanilla
and divide the batter equally between the
pans. Bake for 20-30 mins and remove when
the cake has risen and becomes golden on top.
Allow the cakes to cool on a rack.

4 Pour the whipping cream into another
mixing bowl and whisk until firm peaks form.

5 Once the cakes are cool, remove the
parchment paper and flip one layer onto your
serving plate and spread the jam on top. (You
could also add some cream over the jam, in
the middle of the cake.) Place the second
layer on top and top off with the cream,
berries and a sprinkle of caster sugar, and
decorate the top with berries. Sprinkle with
caster sugar before serving.

PER SERVING 488 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 53.4g, fat 10.7g,
sat fat 6.6g, fibre 1g, sugar 33.2g, salt .1g

Try our
cover recipe!



Homemade jam

Roughly crush 1 pint of fresh
hulled strawberries and
combine in a large pot with 62g
sugar, a pinch of salt, and a
splash of lemon juice – bring
to a boil, stirring occasionally
until the sugar dissolves.
Continue cooking until it
reaches a gel-like consistency
(about 5-8 mins). Test for
sweetness and add 1-2 tbsp
sugar or a squeeze of lemon
juice if required. Stir and skim
off the excess foam from the
top. Remove from heat, set
aside for few mins to cool down,
then transfer into a sterilised jar.
*This recipe makes 1 jar (235ml),
will keep for up to three weeks.*

Nutty orange cake

MAKES 1 (20CM) CAKE • PREP

30 MINS • COOK 45 MINS **A little effort**

1 orange
 100g ground almonds
 100g ground hazelnuts
 50g ground pistachios
 3 free range eggs
 1 cup super fine organic coconut sugar
 1 vanilla pod or 2 tsp vanilla essence
 2 tsp ground cardamom
 1 tsp cinnamon
 3 tsp rose water
 4 cm piece of root ginger or
 2 tsp ginger juice
 Handful of petals or edible flowers (pansy blossoms and lavender), for garnish
 Handful of candied orange peel, for garnish

FOR THE SAFFRON SYRUP

1 tbsp honey
 50ml orange juice
 6 saffron threads
 1 tsp orange zest
 ¼ tsp ground cardamom
 1 tsp rose water
 4 cm piece of root ginger or
 2 tsp ginger juice

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

300g low-fat cream cheese
 55g softened butter
 500g coconut palm sugar
 1 tsp orange zest

1 Preheat oven to 175C. Grease a 20cm round cake tin with coconut oil, ghee or butter and set aside.
2 Boil the orange in water for 1 hr or until soft. Cut in half, de-seed, and then purée in a food processor with the rose water until it becomes a paste.
3 Mix the very fine ground nuts together and add in the baking powder, cardamom, cinnamon, and salt and set aside.
4 Cut the vanilla pod in half lengthwise and scrape the beans inside the pod into a mixing bowl. Peel and then grate the ginger on a micro grater. Squeeze out the juice from the pulp into the mixing bowl. Whisk eggs, coconut sugar, ginger juice and vanilla seeds until thick and velvety. Add the puréed orange, followed by the nut mixture and fold in all the ingredients well. Transfer to the baking tin and bake for around 40-50 mins or

till a skewer inserted in the middle of the cake comes out almost clean. Set aside and cool completely in the tin before transferring to a cake plate.

5 To make the saffron syrup, peel and grate the ginger on a micro grater. Squeeze out the juice into a bowl. Mix in the ginger juice, honey, saffron threads, cardamom, and orange juice and bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, add rose water and orange zest. Whisk and simmer for 2 mins until it becomes like a syrup.

6 To prepare your cream cheese frosting, simply blend all the ingredients until mixed well and velvety in texture.

7 Frost your cake with the cream cheese frosting and decorate with candied orange peel, petals of dried edible flowers, and drops of the saffron syrup.

PER SERVING 527 kcs, protein 9g, carbs 70g, fat 26g, sat fat 6g, fibre 4g, sugar 50g, salt 1g. >>

Coffee queen

Ola Sinno,
founder of Spill
the Bean Café

Lebanon-born Ola Sinno has always

been fascinated by coffee, and loved travelling the world and tasting different coffees. She previously worked in advertising, but decided to turn her love for coffee into a full-time career when she met her husband, who is also a coffee-lover. The two opened their café, Spill the Bean (www.spillthebean.ae), at Sunset Mall earlier this year.

Indulgent delight cake

MAKES 1 (22CM) CAKE • PREP 1 HR

• COOK 45 MINS **A little effort**

275g butter, softened at room temperature

275g superfine caster sugar

4 eggs

275g self-raising flour

4 tbsp milk

1 tbsp vanilla essence

40 milk chocolate fingers

2 tbsp chocolate chips

FOR THE MOUSSE

200g milk chocolate

100ml heavy cream

150g cream cheese

4 tbsp icing sugar

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

250g icing sugar

80g butter, softened at room temperature

30g cocoa powder

2 tbsp milk

1 Preheat the oven to 180C. Grease and line a 9 inch round cake tin with baking paper.

2 In an electric mixer with a paddle attachment, slowly mix together the butter and caster sugar for 3-4 mins until light and fluffy. Add in the eggs, one at a time, with the mixer still running. Sift the flour into the mixing bowl and fold in to the batter using a spatula. Mix in the milk and vanilla essence using a knife. Pour the batter into the cake tin and bake for 35-45 mins, or until a skewer inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack until it has cooled to room temperature.

3 Melt the chocolate in a double boiler, making sure the water in the pan doesn't touch the base of the bowl and allow to cool for 5 mins. Beat in the cream cheese and heavy cream on medium speed until well blended. Sift the icing sugar in and mix for a further 2 mins.

4 To make the buttercream, sift the icing sugar into a bowl and add the butter. Mix until it has reached a grainy consistency and sift in the cocoa powder. Add the milk and mix for 5-7 mins until fluffy.

5 Slice the cake in half horizontally with a serrated knife and spread half the mousse on top of the bottom layer. Place the other half of the cake on top, and spread the remaining mousse on top of the entire cake. With a palette knife, spread the buttercream across the sides and stick the chocolate fingers on each section coated in buttercream – don't wait too long to do this or the buttercream may dry. Generously sprinkle chocolate chips on top and tie a pink ribbon around the cake.

PER SERVING 850 kcals, protein 10g, carbs 94g, fat 50g, sat fat 31g, fibre 2.5g, sugar 70g, salt .3g

Fashion & food enthusiast



Sidiqa Sohail, founder of Spontiphoria

Emirati-national Sidiqa Sohail moved back to Dubai last year, after completing her Masters in the UK. She has loved baking ever since she was a child, and decided to launch a one-of-a-kind bakery, café, boutique, and event venue all rolled into one, Spontiphoria (facebook.com/spontiphoria), in Jumeirah last year. The shabby-chic venue specialises in wholesome cakes and brownies, and also offers breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea.

Dairyfree
diva**Turner Francis,**
founder of CocoYogo,
a vegan product line

British-Jamaican Turner Francis was forced to

live a dairy- and gluten-free life when she found out about her food intolerances, which led her to launching Coco Yogo (www.nutritina.com), her own line of coconut yoghurts, coconut ice creams, coconut butter and vegan cheesecakes, currently available at Biorganic and Ripe Farm Shops. With a day job as a banker, Turner is in the process of switching careers to focus on the brand she's been developing for the last two years.

until finely chopped. Press mixture tightly into the bottom of a spring-form pan. Use the bottom of a glass to press the crust down, and place in the freezer to set for 1 hr.

3 Blend all the filling ingredients, except the beetroot juice, until smooth – the texture should be creamy. Remove half of the blended mixture to a separate bowl, add the beetroot juice and blend until fully incorporated. You should have a bright red velvet colour mixture. Pour this on top of the almond crust and spread until smooth. Freeze for 2 hrs or until it sets but not completely hard. Pour the remaining cashew cream on top, cover with foil and freeze overnight. The freezing process will re-harden the coconut oil and set the cake. After it is frozen, you can refrigerate it. The cake will take on a similar texture to a regular cheesecake when refrigerated.

4 Place all the topping ingredients, except xanthan gum, into a glass bowl with a lid and place in an oven on the lowest heat setting for 1 hr – or in a dehydrator on the fruit setting – until the berries have softened but haven't turned mushy. Remove and slightly pulse ¼ of the berry compote mix in the blender.

5 Mix xanthan gum with warm water in the blender until all lumps disappear, and add to the final berry mix and stir. Refrigerate for a few hours so that the mixture becomes a gel. Spread the berry mix over the cheesecake and serve.

PER SERVING 750 kcals, protein 17.5g, carbs 54g, fat 55g, sat fat 0g, fibre 8.5g, sugar 30g, salt .3g >>

Raw vegan red velvet cheesecake

MAKES 1 (20CM) CAKE ● PREP 2 ½ HRS (CAN BE MADE 24 HRS IN ADVANCE)

● NO COOK **A little effort**

256g almonds
128g dried Medjool dates

FOR THE FILLING

430g raw cashews – soaked for at least 1 hr
180ml fresh lemon juice
2 tsp of lemon zest, grated
185ml agave or sweetener of your choice
250ml organic, unrefined coconut oil – liquefied
60ml of freshly pressed beetroot juice
60ml coconut butter

1 vanilla bean or 2 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp sea salt

FOR THE TOPPING

224g of blueberries
224g of raspberries
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp agave
¼ tsp xanthan gum

1 To melt the coconut oil, place the oil in a bowl, on top of a shallow bowl filled with warm water – stir to soften. Replace the water in the shallow bowl with fresh warm water and repeat until the oil is completely melted. If needed, change the water about 4 times to make it reach a fully liquid state.

2 Blend almonds and dates in a food processor



Has wanderlust!



Yana Kalwani,
founder of Pantry Café

Yana Kalwani is of Indian origin but grew up in Dubai. Yana's

background is in management, but her love and passion for travel and good food inspired her to opening Pantry Café (www.pantrycafe.me), a neighbourhood-style gourmet eatery and retail outlet specialising in natural, wholesome food, at Wasl Square, in 2013.

Passion fruit mousse cake

MAKES 1 (20CM) CAKE • PREP 45 MINS

• COOK 12 HRS **Easy**

3 eggs

90g caster sugar

90g flour

A bunch of red currants, physalis and 1

passion fruit cut in half (for garnish)

7 macarons, for garnish

FOR THE MOUSSE

150g passion fruit pulp

225g caster sugar

100ml whipping cream

6 egg whites

FOR THE GLAZE

60g caster sugar

75g passion fruit juice

1 gelatin sheet

1 Make the sponge cake by beating the eggs and sugar until the colour turns a light, pale yellow. Slowly fold in the flour and mix well. Pour the batter into a very thin layer in an 8 inch cake pan and bake for 12 mins. Once the cake is cooked, allow it to cool and gently take off from the cake pan.

2 Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks and

then fold with the passion fruit purée. In a separate bowl beat the egg whites and sugar until you create stiff peaks. Fold it in with the cream and purée mixture.

3 In an 8 inch cake ring, place the cooked sponge cake and then pour the mousse over it until it reaches the top of the ring. Refrigerate overnight to set.

4 Make a glaze by heating the sugar and passion fruit juice and then adding the gelatin sheet to it. Add a few passion fruit seeds and then carefully pour this mixture over the mousse and allow to set for another 1 hr. Once set, unmold the cake using a hot towel wrapped around the ring, and then place the cake on a cake board. Arrange macarons at the sides of the cake and garnish the top with redcurrants, physalis and passion fruit.

PER SERVING 323 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 57.5g, fat 7.7g, sat fat 4g, fibre 2.3g, sugar 46.5g, salt .3g

The concepts people!



Ravisha and Sneha Bhatia,
founders of Sugaholic Bakery

The two sisters, who are of Indian origin, launched the brand with a bake-sale in 2010, to help raise funds for the education of a young girl in India. Within days after the sale ended, friends were calling in to order decorated cupcakes, leading to the social media-savvy sisters opening their bakery (www.sugaholic.com) in Karama in 2012, where they create concept cakes for everything from birthdays and baby showers to weddings.



Coffee caramel cake

MAKES 1 (20CM AND 15CM) CAKE ● PREP

2 HRS ● COOK 45 MINS **More of a challenge**

400g white sugar

230g unsalted butter

2 large eggs

420g all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

710ml milk

10 tsp instant coffee

200g fondant, rolled out

1g rose pink gel colouring

FOR THE COFFEE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

500g unsalted butter

370g icing sugar

117ml cream

6 tsp instant coffee

FOR THE CARAMEL

500g white sugar

500g cream

FOR THE GREEN AND PINK BUTTERCREAM

1kg and 500g unsalted butter

1kg and 100g icing sugar

3 tsp leaf green colour gel colouring

1/2 tsp dark pink colour gel colouring

1/2 tsp rose pink colour gel colouring

1/2 tsp pink colour gel colouring

All buttercream frostings can be halved.

1 Preheat the oven to 180C and prepare an 8inch and 6inch cake pan.

2 Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat. Add the flour, baking soda and baking powder and mix with milk. Add instant coffee, mix and pour into the cake pans. Bake for 35-45 mins.

3 To make the coffee buttercream, cream together the butter and icing sugar until light and fluffy. Add the coffee and gradually add the cream. Mix and set aside to cool.

4 For the caramel, melt the sugar in a pan – don't stir too much. When it becomes light brown, remove from the heat, and pour in the cream. Mix well and set aside.

5 Slice the cakes horizontally and spread ¼ of the buttercream on each cake. Drizzle the caramel sauce on top of each slice and place the layers back to make two cakes.

6 Beat the butter on medium-high speed for 2 mins. Reduce speed, add the icing sugar a cup at a time and beat, scraping down the sides of the bowl. After every two additions, raise speed to medium-high and beat for 10 secs, then reduce to medium. To tint the buttercream, leave aside ¼ of the icing for the light pink, dark pink and dark green design. Separate the icing equally and add the gel drops to get the desired colour. Tint the rest leaf green in colour.

7 Place the cakes on a turntable and spread 500g of the leaf green icing across the top.

Glide the spatula on the icing, don't let the spatula touch the cake. Smoothen the top with the edge of the spatula and sweep the edge of the spatula from the rim of the cake to its centre, then lift it off and remove excess icing. Cover the sides and smoothen by holding the spatula upright with the edge against the icing, and slowly spinning the turntable without lifting the spatula from the icings' surface. Return excess icing and repeat until sides are smooth.

8 Rotate the cakes and repeat the procedure, starting from a new point on the rim until you have covered the entire top surface. Smoothen the center with your spatula. Set the cakes aside for 15 mins before decorating.

9 Place the 8inch cake on a thick cake board, and insert 4 dowels. Snip the tops of the dowels so they are level with the cake. Place the 6inch cake on a board and place on top of the bottom cake.

10 Pipe the light and dark pink icing on the cake to make flowers, followed by the green icings for the leaves and leaf green icing all around the edges. To make the fondant flower, mix the pink gel with fondant and make round balls. Flatten each very thin, and roll gently at the bottom. Twist the upper part out to shape like petals.

PER SERVING 1,870 kJ, protein 3.8g, carbs 184g, fat 125g, sat fat 80g, fibre 1.3g, sugar 57g, salt .3g >>



Paleo pumpkin gingerbread cake with coconut vanilla frosting

MAKES 1 (22CM) CAKE • PREP 30 MINS

• COOK 1 HR **Easy** **Gluten Free**

1 jar of gingerbread cashew butter

50g walnuts, coarsely chopped

FOR THE WET INGREDIENT MIX

375g carrots, finely grated

1 small can crushed pineapple

45g fresh ginger, minced

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

175ml unsweetened applesauce

235ml full fat coconut milk

4 whole eggs, lightly beaten

FOR THE DRY INGREDIENT MIX

100g coconut flour

175g almond meal

75g arrowroot flour

75g walnuts, coarsely chopped

120g dried apricots, chopped

100g raisins

2 tsp baking soda

1 tsp cream of tartar

2 tbsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp dried ginger

1 tsp sea salt

½ tsp ground clove

½ tsp ground allspice

½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

1 Preheat your oven to 190C and grease two 9 inch round cake pans with coconut oil and line the bottom with parchment paper.

2 In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients and mix well with a large whisk until fully incorporated. Set aside.

3 In a separate bowl, add the wet ingredients and mix until well blended. Pour into the dry ingredient mix and stir with a rubber spatula until well combined. Divide the mixture equally between the two prepared pans. Bake for 1 hr or until the edges become a nice golden colour, and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Leave to cool on a wire rack then refrigerate until completely chilled – at least 4-6 hrs, or overnight.

4 With a spatula, spread half the cashew butter on top of one cake, and place the other cake on top. Spread the other half of the frosting on the cake and garnish with chopped walnuts.

PER SERVING 690 kcal, protein 17.5g, carbs 55g, fat 47.5g, sat fat 8.5g, fibre 11g, sugar 21g, salt 1.5g **GF**

Health food gurus

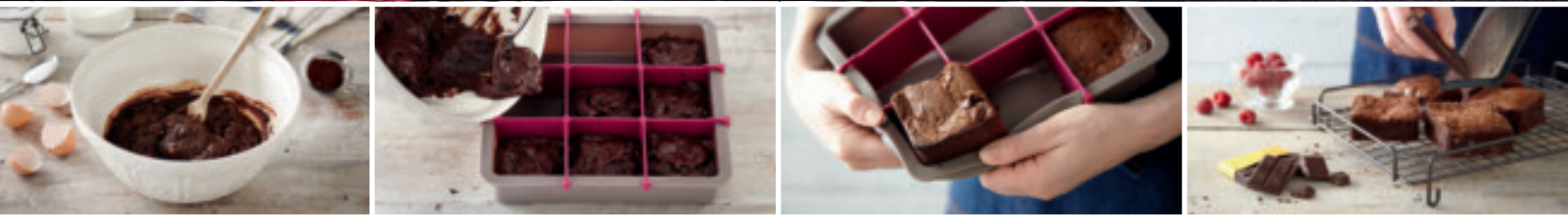
Noëlle El Saadany and Amira Ibrahim, founders of Bare Dubai

French-Egyptian national, Noëlle, who works in the art field, and Egyptian-born advertising professional Amira met when Noëlle moved to Dubai from Paris a few years ago, and have been best friends ever since. The idea for Bare Dubai ([instagram.com/bare.dubai](https://www.instagram.com/bare.dubai)), a product line of dairy-free nut milks, gluten-free and paleo nut butters and spreads, was born after Noelle was diagnosed with a rare auto immune disease, which required her to eat a diet filled with anti-inflammatory food, and Amira developed food allergies around the same time. The girls retail their products through their Instagram account.




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“In Spain, we usually eat white asparagus with lemon and mayonnaise. So, I took my family's traditional recipe and adapted it using Spanish Manchego cheese to create a modern and elegant dish.”

- Alvaro Roa

Put Spain on your plate



In the first of a three-part series, Alvaro Roa, sous chef at Salero Tapas and Bodega, Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, shows you how to perfect a classic Spanish dish.

White asparagus with manchego cheese cream

SERVES 4 | PREP 2 HRS | COOK 5 MINS **Easy**

20 white asparagus spears, cut in half
200g Manchego cheese, grated
20ml double cream
100ml skimmed milk
2g soy lecithine (Available at health stores)
2ml truffle oil
Handful of shiso cress leaves, for garnish

1 Clean and boil the white asparagus until al dente. Cool the spears in an ice bath.

2 Blend half the Manchego cheese with the double cream and 20ml milk to make a thick cream (Step 1). Place the mixture in a piping bag and refrigerate for 1 hr.

3 To make the foam, use a hand blender to mix together the rest of the milk and Manchego cheese, lecithine and truffle oil – the foam should be frothy (Step 2).

4 Pipe the Manchego cream on to the plate (Step 3) and mash down with the back of a spoon. Add the asparagus spears on top, and then the foam (Step 4). Garnish with shiso cress leaves and a drizzle of olive oil and serve immediately.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

1 Blend the ingredients together to make a thick cream.



2 Lift the hand blender every few seconds to let air get into the mixture so the foam has small bubbles.



3 Pipe four lines of cream onto the plate, side by side.



4 Using a spoon, slowly add the foam on top.



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DUBAI



Scary bat
bunting

Dracula's blood punch

Maggoty dustbin pasta

Slime
bug cups

Food styling: CASSIE BERT and EMILY KYDD | Styling: JENNY UGLEDEN

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Halloween
is on 31
October

Throw your little monsters a party they won't forget with this spooky spread. Recipes CASSIE BEST Photographs SAM STOWELL

Cheesy
popcorn
brains

Spider
nest
cakes

Witch's cauldron with
glow-in-the-dark goo

Sausage
mummy
dippers



really well, then tip into a food processor or blender with the soup, spices, chilli sauce and some seasoning and whizz to a smooth purée (or put back in the saucepan and whizz with a stick-blender). Set aside.

4 Just before the guests are due to arrive, heat the dip in a microwave or saucepan – it should be nice and hot. Spoon into the bread cauldron, pop on the lid and carry to the party table, ready for dunking in the Sausage mummies (below), cucumber sticks and more toasted bread. And as the dip disappears, you can start to eat the cauldron, too!

PER SERVING 157 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 28g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 4g, sugar 7g, salt 1.1g

Sausage mummy dippers

MAKES 12 ● PREP 15 MINS

● COOK 20 MINS **Easy**

Oil, for greasing

1 tbsp honey

1 tbsp ketchup

2 tsp yellow mustard,
plus a little extra to decorate

12 chipolatas

Tube of 6 ready-to-roll croissants
(look in the chiller cabinets near
the pastry in supermarkets)

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and brush 2 baking trays with a little oil. Mix the honey, ketchup and mustard together in a bowl, then brush over the chipolata sausages.

2 Unroll the croissant dough and divide into 3 rectangles. Pinch together the diagonal perforated seams, then cut into long thin strips – you should get about 16 per rectangle.

3 Wind the little croissant strips around the chipolatas, leaving a little gap at one end to make a slit for the eyes. Place on baking trays and bake for 20 mins. Cool a little, then, using the mustard, dot a pair of little yellow eyes on to each mummy. Serve warm with the goo and/or your favourite dip.

PER MUMMY 148 kcals, protein 6g, carbs 10g, fat 9g, sat fat 4g, fibre none, sugar 4g, salt 0.8g

MAKE IT

Gluten Free

Use a gluten-free loaf and dippers, and check the tomato soup label.

Witch's cauldron with glow-in-the-dark goo

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 12 WITH OTHER NIBBLES ● PREP 35 MINS

● COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **1 of 5-a-day**

1 large round loaf of bread

1 egg, beaten

100g poppy seeds (can be substituted with chia seeds)

1kg butternut squash chunks

1 onion, roughly chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled

400g can cream of tomato soup

1 tsp each ground cumin and coriander

2 tbsp chilli sauce

Extra toasted pita bread, Sausage mummies and cucumber sticks, to dip

1 Slice the top off the loaf, then scoop out the soft bread from the middle of the base, leaving the crust about 2.5cm thick all the way round. Slice the bread out in chunks for toasting to serve, or simply get the kids to pull it out with their fingers.

2 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Brush the outside of the large 'cauldron' and lid all over with beaten egg, then roll the crust of the cauldron and lid in poppy or chia seeds to coat – tipping them onto a big dinner plate first makes this easier. Sit on baking sheets, seed-sides up, and bake for 10 mins. Set aside until you are ready to party.

3 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the butternut squash, onion and garlic, then simmer until the squash and onion are tender. Drain



Maggoty dustbin pasta

SERVES 12 WITH OTHER PARTY

NIBBLES OR 6 ON ITS OWN ● PREP

15 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS Easy Gluten Free Vit C P

400g orzo pasta

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 red peppers, chopped

325g canned sweetcorn, drained

175g frozen peas
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp five-spice
280g shredded ham
1 tbsp soy sauce
220g jar black bean sauce
1 tbsp sesame oil

1 Cook the pasta using pack instructions. Drain, run under cold water, and drain again.

2 Meanwhile, heat the veg oil in a large pan or wok, add the peppers, sweetcorn, peas, garlic and five-spice and stir-fry for a few mins. Add the ham, soy sauce, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the black bean sauce and the orzo, stir well and cook for 1-2 mins. Stir in the sesame oil and check seasoning.

3 Heat the remaining black bean sauce in microwave. Tip pasta into a large bowl or a small, clean dustbin or cauldron. Drizzle over remaining sauce and let everyone dig in.

PER SERVING 228 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 35g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 4g, sugar 7g, salt 2.3g



Cheesy popcorn brains

MAKES 12 ● PREP 5 MINS

● COOK 12 MINS Easy Gluten Free V

1½ tbsp vegetable oil, plus
extra for shaping
125g popping corn

325g cheddar, grated
½ tsp Dijon mustard
Few pinches of cayenne pepper

1 Heat oil in a large saucepan. Tip in the corn, cover and shake the pan to coat the kernels. Cook over a medium heat until the corn stops popping, about 5 mins, shaking the pan every so often. Take off heat and sprinkle with a little salt.

2 Put cheese, mustard and pepper in a small pan and heat gently until melted and bubbling. Drizzle over the popcorn and mix well until completely coated.

3 Rub hands with a little oil and quickly grab handfuls of popcorn and squeeze into brain shapes. Place on a tray lined with parchment, then leave to cool. Cover with cling film until ready to eat or store in a jar – you can make a few hours before serving.

PER SERVING 178 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 5g, fat 14g, sat fat 7g, fibre 1g, sugar none, salt 0.7g

MAKE IT Gluten Free

Use a gluten-free variety of mustard.



Bat biscuits make
a suitably eerie
party decoration

Scary bat bunting

MAKES AS MUCH AS YOU WANT ●
PREP 1 HR ● COOK ACCORDING TO
YOUR RECIPE Easy Gluten Free UN-ICED

Use your favourite gingerbread recipe – we used a half batch from our Homemade gingerbread cottage at bbcgoodfoodme.com.

Once you've made the dough, stamp out the biscuits using a bat-shaped biscuit cutter (see *Get the look box*). Arrange on baking parchment-lined baking sheets, then cook according to your recipe.

As you lift each tray from the oven, use a skewer to wiggle one or two holes into each biscuit – depending on whether you want to string them up individually or hang them like bunting.

Leave the biscuits to cool completely, then decorate with black icing. >>

**Spider
nest cakes**

MAKES 15 ● PREP
40 MINS ● COOK
20 MINS **Easy** **V**
🍷 UNDECORATED



175g softened butter
175g golden caster sugar
2 large eggs
200g self-raising flour
1 tsp vanilla extract
100ml milk
100g nonpareils (coloured sprinkles)
Little icing sugar
Candy floss
12 plastic spiders (or make your own from giant chocolate buttons and black liquorice laces)

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Line muffin tins with 15 muffin cases (bake a second batch of the extra 3 if you only have one 12-hole tin). Beat the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Beat in the

eggs, flour, vanilla and milk in that order. Quickly stir in the hundreds & thousands with as little effort as you can, then divide the mixture between the cases – the more you work the batter, the more the sprinkles will bleed their colour, so it's best to do this quickly and efficiently. Bake for 20 mins until a skewer inserted in the centre of the cakes comes out clean. Leave to cool.

2 Peel off the paper cases, and turn the cakes upside down. Cover with cling film until it's nearly party time.

3 Just before the party, mix a splash of water into some sifted icing sugar, and add a good blob to the top of each cake. Tease off some candy floss and stick a little pile on each – the less you handle it, the less it will disintegrate. Add a toy spider to each, or make your own – stick 4 long liquorice lace strands to the back of giant chocolate buttons with some more runny icing, flip over and leave to set.

PER CAKE 238 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 26g, fat 11g, sat fat 6g, fibre none, sugar 23g, salt 0.3g

**Slime
bug cups**

MAKES 12
● PREP 25 MINS
PLUS SETTING
● NO COOK **Easy** **V**



540g lime jelly
A selection of animal and bug sweets
300g Oreo cookies

1 Make up the jelly following pack instructions. Pour a third of the mixture into 12 small glasses or plastic pots. Add a couple of bugs to each pot, then leave to set in the fridge, keeping remaining jelly at room temperature.
2 Once set, add more bugs to each container (lean some against edges,

so they stick out the top). Pour over a third of the jelly and leave to set in the fridge. Repeat with remaining bugs and jelly.

3 For the soil topping, place cookies in a plastic bag and, using a rolling pin, bash into crumbs, then tip onto a plate.

4 Just before serving, sprinkle a layer of soil over each set jelly, then top with a mushroom, a slug and some ants or your choice of creepy crawlies.

PER CUP 286 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 55g, fat 5g, sat fat 3g, fibre 1g, sugar 47g, salt 0.3g

▲ **TIP** Save leftover plastic pots from sauces and dips to use for your bug cups.

GET THE LOOK

Bat biscuit cutter and mini dustbin

From *Lakeland* and *Tavola*.

'Cauldron'

Use a big, round loaf from Paul Café.

Spooky sweets

• **Frogs, snails, snakes, ant sprinkles**

(chocolate strands) and worms

Haribo Gummix at leading supermarkets.

• **Mushrooms and Dracula's fangs**

From candy stores or pick & mix stalls.

• **Plastic spider cake toppers** from any toy store.



Refreshing
drink fit for
a vampire

Dracula's blood punch

SERVES 12 ● PREP 10 MINS PLUS
4 HRS CHILLING ● COOK 5 MINS

Easy 🍷 1 of 5-a-day

2l cherry juice

Peel from 3 oranges, pared with a vegetable peeler

1 thumb-sized red chilli, pierced a few times but left whole

3 cinnamon sticks

10 cloves

6 slices ginger

Dracula's fangs sweets, to serve, (optional)

1 Tip the cherry juice, orange peel, chilli, cinnamon sticks, cloves and ginger into a large saucepan. Simmer for 5 mins, then turn off the heat. Leave to cool, then chill for at least 4 hrs, or up to 2 days – the longer you leave it the more intense the flavours. If serving to young children, take the chilli out after a few hours.

2 When you're ready to serve, pour the juice into a jug. Serve in glass bottles or glasses and pop a straw in each. Dangle a fangs sweet from each glass.

PER GLASS 77 kcals, protein none, carbs 18g, fat none, sat fat none, fibre none, sugar 17g, salt none **GF**



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TO HELL('S KITCHEN) AND BACK

Nicola Monteath speaks to charming French chef, Jean Christophe Novelli, about his meteoric rise to the top, subsequent fall, and eventual recovery, to find out what lessons he's learnt from the journey.

Tall, mysterious and attractive – those characteristics describe the acclaimed French celebrity chef and TV personality, Jean Christophe Novelli, down to a T. Jean is a breeze to talk to, and doesn't mind opening up, whether it's about his rise and fall in the culinary industry, appearances on TV shows, or his culinary school, Novelli Academy, which has now been running for about ten years.

Jean was born in Arras, and like many French chefs, stepped into the kitchen at a very young age. His story isn't formulaic, though. Jean was kicked out of school at 14 and was told that he couldn't live at home if he didn't have a job, so he asked his father to get him a placement at the local bakery, and thus began young Jean's journey. While most boys were playing rough in the playground at that point, Jean was in the bakery picking up whatever skills he could. "Patisserie is the foundation of cooking. If you can bake, you can cook, but a good cook can't always bake," he says. At 19, Jean took on the position of private head chef to Elie de Rothschild (from the Rothschild family banking dynasty) which he gained after someone from the Rothschild family approached his father to recruit Jean. He then moved to the UK at the age of 20 after taking an interest in the English language, and further pursued his career as Head Chef of The Maltsters, a pub owned by celebrated TV show host, Keith Floyd. "I remember it being such a sentimental time because it was my dream to go to England – I was like Alice in wonderland!" he reminisces. "In France, I would have to justify myself and my dishes in every way, but in England I got to be innovative and the opportunities were immense," he says.

Starry success

After working behind the scenes for over 12 years, Jean opened his first restaurant at the Four Seasons in London in 1996, with just £500 (about Dhs3,000) in his pocket. The restaurant received rave reviews and Jean was handed an AA Rosette (an award from the British Automobile Association for fine dining restaurants) within just

Photographs SUPPLIED

two years of being open. “Receiving Michelin stars and Rosette awards meant everything to me at that point, and it always came as a shock,” he says. The launch of this restaurant was the start of his empire, and Jean went on to quickly open another restaurant in the UK, before opening Novelli at The Cellars, Relais et Chateaux Hotel in Cape Town, and Moulin de Jean in Normandy, France. Jean also did a stint working as a consultant chef on Sea France ferries.

There’s no doubt that Jean’s restaurants were successful no matter where he set up shop, but they say the biggest fall come after the biggest rise, and his came in the form of bankruptcy in 1999. “My restaurants were successful and it was everything, but over time I lost control,” he says. One of his biggest regrets was not even knowing the amount in his bank account by the time he had seven restaurants. Building an empire can take time and effort, but losing it all can happen instantly, as we find out from Jean. “You have to make sure you use your money right! My costs were up, money was distributed and a lot was happening all at once. For example, I had a whole floor for the PR department which wasn’t necessary,” he says. Jean lost his ground and let success take over, and even he now knows that it all happened too quickly. “Money is not my motivation. It all started from a small café that I opened which grew into a 3-Michelin star restaurant, so it was a lot to take in,” he says.

The restaurants crashed after just three years, as the teams weren’t prepared for when writers and critics came in and the results weren’t consistent and so Jean sold all of his restaurants and decided to go on a sabbatical to recover. His biggest take away from this, and a piece of advice he gives all entrepreneurs is, “Only eat when you can chew, and only chew when you can digest.” By this he means do everything step by step and prepare yourself for it.

6 *Patisserie is the foundation of cooking. If you can bake, you can cook, but a good cook can’t always bake.* 9

He spent his transition time learning golf, playing football and running triathlons every month to get fit and kick his cigarette habit. “I used to spend my time at home relaxing with my 25 dogs, I bought a farm nearby as well, and was just getting back to life slowly,” he says. During this time, he made sure to maintain his culinary connection with cookbooks such as *Your Place or Mine?* *Cooking at Home with Restaurant Style* (Quadrille Publishing Ltd) which he co-authored, and *Everyday Novelli: More Than 100 Recipes from the Nation’s Favourite French Chef* (Headline).

His next big move was to get back into the field with a bang, but this time he took a different approach by opening a culinary school close to his farm near Luton. “I still have that urgency to get back into a restaurant kitchen sometimes, but I don’t miss it as much. I don’t like seeing my diners through a window,” he says.

He tells us if he had it any other way, he would love to get back the time he missed out with his oldest daughter, Christina, who is now 27. Learning from this experience, Jean now spends plenty of time with his children Jean, 5 ½, and Jack, 20 months’ old, and even cooks for them on a daily basis. “They eat well and aren’t picky, and the oldest one likes making pancakes and pizza with me as well,” he reveals.

From school dropout to doctorate

Jean has never truly considered himself an academic person, yet he managed to bag the Honorary Doctor of Arts from Bedfordshire University for 30 years of dedication in the field. “I’m passionate and creative, but I never call myself a Doctor – it’s something I joke about with friends, as I’ve worked with kids who actually graduated from school,” he says. This sort of humility and dedication towards the field, not just for awards and accreditations, is probably why Jean has made it back to the top again with the opening of his culinary school. The irony of it all, that amuses Jean and those who know his story, is that he was once kicked out of school, but now owns one! Novelli Academy opened in 2005 in a 14th century farmhouse between Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Jean and his fiancé Michelle head the culinary school surrounded by acres of greenery, and Jean himself can be booked for courses on French classics with a twist, and patisserie. The school also offers cuisines like British and Italian, and chef’s training

programmes for cooking enthusiasts from all over the world.

The kitchen is equipped with Electrolux appliances – Jean is an ambassador for the brand – as the academy is based near the Electrolux head offices in Luton. “I like to be associated with quality products and this brand has many of those when it comes to domestic innovation,” he says.

This time round, Jean is getting it right with his academy, by being consistent and not letting the success of the school outshine him. Often dubbed the UK’s best French chef, and credits his parents

for instilling the importance of maintaining consistent standards through life.

Cooking is Jean’s first love, but he also enjoys telling his story and sharing his favourite recipes in cookbooks and TV shows. The chef appeared on Hell’s Kitchen in 2005, The X Factor: Battle of the Stars in 2006, Chef Academy – his own show on Bravo TV (USA) where he trained nine amateur chefs to become professionals – and Britain’s Best Chef, most recently, where he was a judge.

In fact, it is through TV shows that he has got to know many of his peers that he is quick to acknowledge as having learnt from, like Raymond Blanc, Keith Floyd and Marco Pierre White. “Marco and I met at a cooking competition, and he has been a mentor ever since. We gelled instantly and the support he gave me was enormous,” he says. Jean also considers Gary Rhodes a great mentor, and cherishes the time he spent with him while filming together on Hell’s Kitchen. “He was challenging on set, but fun to work with as well. I was always a big fan of his and read all his books, and if I were younger I would definitely want to train with him,” he says.

Their paths may well cross again soon, as the well-travelled chef also appears to have an affinity for the UAE, having visited thrice already. “The people, especially the Emiratis, are so welcoming and such foodies! I had never realised so many local gentlemen were into cooking and so passionate about it, which is really great to see,” he says. As for whether he has plans of opening a restaurant or school here, Jean reveals he is open to all offers and thinks a cookery school would work well in Dubai or Abu Dhabi. “I do consult around the world for many restaurant owners and groups but I think an extension of Novelli Academy would work extremely well. We are already talking to several potential investors,” he says.

Traditionalists may protest, but Jean likes taking a novel approach to French cooking. “I felt there are books that show French cooking as being complicated and time consuming and at times when people are busy, they should be able to cook their favourite dishes quickly and healthily,” he says. Jean focuses on healthy cooking in his cooking classes and demonstrations, preferring to use herbs, spices and natural sugars like honey to yield better results than recipes which call for salt, butter and oil as flavour enhancers.

Here he shows us his French–light style of cooking with these recipes from his most recent cookbook, *Simply Novelli: Quick and Easy French Classics* (Relish Publications), a compilation of French recipes with a twist, that was published last year. >>

SIGNATURE RECIPES



Mouton Boulangère (Slow cooked mutton with potatoes)

SERVES 4-6 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 1 HR 40 MINS **Easy**

- 4-6 mutton chops
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 sprig rosemary
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- 4 large onions, sliced
- 1 bulb garlic, halved and unpeeled
- 1 tsp honey
- 6 medium sized potatoes, unpeeled and thinly sliced
- ½ celeriac, thinly sliced
- 100g Beaufort cheese or mature cheddar
- 250ml white wine or Vermouth
- 400ml hot lamb or vegetable stock
- 3 tbsps extra virgin rapeseed oil

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180C.
- 2 Using a hot sauté pan with a lid, dry fry the mutton chops for about 10 mins each side – keep the lid on to help generate moisture and

reduce the fat. Place the covered pan into the oven for a further 30 mins.

3 In the meantime, prepare the vegetables. Using another sauté pan, heat a little juice from the mutton in the oven. Add the herbs, sliced onions, spices and garlic and cover. Sweat over a low heat until slightly coloured. Add the honey and stir, followed by the potatoes and celeriac and sweat for a further 5 mins. If the vegetables look a little dry, drizzle over a little oil or stock. After 30 mins, remove the mutton from the oven.

4 Using a large gratin dish, start layering the potatoes with the onions and celeriac. Place the cheese in the middle of the dish. Add a layer of mutton chops around the cheese and drizzle a small amount of juice from the meat pan over the chops. Finish with a final layer of potatoes around the cheese. Discard the fat left in the pan, then put the pan back on the heat.

5 Bring the stock and wine to the boil in the same pan, and skim any residue that appears on the surface. Add the mixture to the potatoes until covered. Cover the gratin dish with foil and place into the oven for 30 mins at 180C, then for 10 mins at a slightly lower temperature of 160C. After 10 mins, lift the foil carefully from the gratin dish and check that there is a thick sauce formed over the potatoes and meat. If this hasn't happened, place back in the oven, uncovered, for a further 10 mins. Serve from the pan in the centre of your table.



CHEF'S TIP

This dish is best prepared the day before, with the final baking process being done on the day of serving. Lamb can be used as a substitute for mutton.



Tarte Tatin (Baked apple with caramel)

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 40 MINS **Easy**

- 5 apples, peeled and halved
- 100g butter
- 1 star anise
- ½ vanilla pod, halved lengthways
- 6 cardamom pods
- 200g sugar
- 150g store-bought puff pastry, rolled out to make a sheet.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180C.
- 2 Using a large ovenproof frying pan (approximately 28cm), gently melt the butter on a medium heat with the star anise, vanilla pod and cardamom pods. Add the sugar and gently mix everything until pale yellow in colour.
- 3 Pat dry the apples with kitchen paper and place neatly, face down, into the pan and set aside.
- 4 Roll out the puff pastry into a circle, approximately 28cm in diameter and ½cm thick. Carefully place it over the entire pan, pressing the pastry all around the apples to form a tight seal. Tuck the pastry under the apples at the edge of the pan – this will prevent the pastry from steaming. Put the pan on a low heat. After a couple of mins, lift the pan, place your hand over the pastry and, holding it tight, pour off the excess liquid like the butter – this is saturated fat that has formed and isn't required. Repeat this process twice before placing the pan into the oven for approximately 25-30 mins. Remove from the oven and rest for about 5 mins, to allow the caramel to settle and become firm.
- 5 To serve, position a lightly oiled plate, larger than the pan, and turn the tatin out over the pan – be careful not to spill the caramel that may still be hot. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

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12 ways to boost your metabolism

Your metabolism naturally slows down with age, but with these smart tips from the experts, you can boost it to ensure you sustain energy levels throughout the day, burn calories, and enable your body to function optimally. By Nicola Monteath.

Metabolism is essentially a bio-chemical process which combines calories in food with oxygen, to fuel up the body and release energy – to facilitate all its functions, from physical movement to brain use, digestion, and cell repair. It's important to have a fast metabolism, as this allows the body to burn more calories. While each person's Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR), or the rate at which food is converted into energy, is genetic, it is also affected by age and activity levels, and closely linked to muscle tissue and nutrition as well. Simply put, the more muscle you have, the more calories you burn. This, combined with the food choices you make, and lifestyle habits, allows you to alter your metabolism levels, in order to not feel sluggish, improve sleeping patterns, and most importantly, burn calories when you aren't even exercising – what's not to love about that?

If that seems like reason enough to combat your body's natural metabolic slow-down, or if you simply want to amp up your metabolism, follow these simple lifestyle tips from the experts:

HEAT THINGS UP

Increase the health benefits of a dish by adding a hint of spice to it, whether it's chopped red or green chilli peppers, or a sprinkle of cayenne pepper. Dr Dana Al-Hamwi, GP and Clinical Dietician at Sama Medical Centre, says chillies have a compound called capsaicin which temporarily increases your metabolic rate. Ginger is another metabolism-boosting hero, as it heats up your body. "Cayenne pepper and ginger both speed up your metabolism by heating up your body. Once there is a rise in body temperature, the body needs to work to cool it down, increasing the metabolic rate – this burns calories. Ginger also helps curb your appetite by stimulating your digestive system," adds Wiebke Katsoudas, co-Founder of juice delivery brand Essentially. Add ginger slices to a cup of tea, enrich your juices with cold-pressed ginger root, or use in your cooking – it will help the digestive process as well as fuel your metabolism.

2 MAKE BREKKIE COUNT!

This is the most important meal of the day, and for good reason. “Breakfast kick-starts your metabolic rate, but that also depends on what you eat,” says Archana Arora, Senior Dietician at Health Factory. A nutritious breakfast of whole grains like quinoa, high-protein food like eggs and lean meat, and rich-in-fibre items like oats and fruits are ideal. Chia seeds are also a great choice as a topping for cereal and smoothies as they are high in omega-3 fats, fibre, protein and vitamins and minerals, which help fire up your metabolism and stimulate glucagon (a fat-burning hormone).



3 SAY YES TO COFFEE

Who doesn't love waking up with their morning cup of coffee? “The advantage of coffee is that it provides a short-term rise in your metabolic rate, if taken in moderation. The caffeine can also increase your durability during physical activity, allowing the body to refresh from a constantly exhausted feeling,” says Hala Abu Taha, Dietitian, The Right Bite Nutrition and Catering Services. But this doesn't mean you now start guzzling down coffee to keep yourself wired – two to four cups of coffee is recommended per day. While it is beneficial for the body, Dana recommends having it only after breakfast, as that is when it is more effective in mobilising fat from the fat tissues, while increasing metabolism.

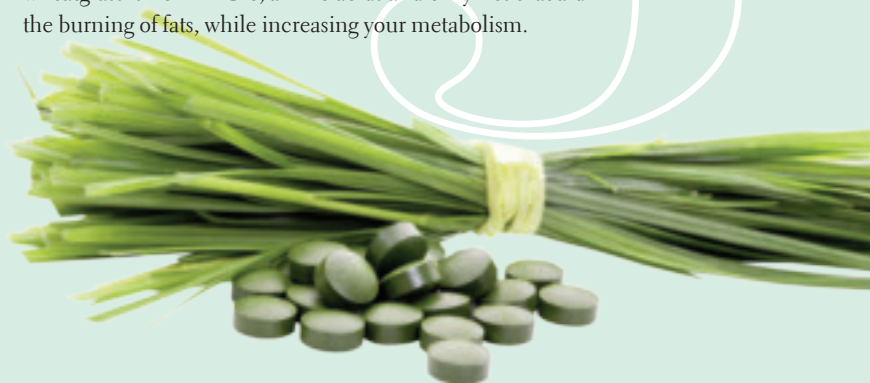
4 DEVOUR DARK CHOCOLATE

Dark chocolate contains catechins (a type of natural phenol and antioxidant), caffeine, and monounsaturated fats which boosts your metabolism and stimulates your body to burn fat even when you aren't exercising. Dana recommends a small square (five to ten grams) of dark chocolate (over 70 per cent) as a snack, any time of the day.



5 HAVE A GREEN SHOT

Wheatgrass is a really hardworking superfood and to add to the feathers in its hat, it helps in the functioning of the thyroid gland – the main gland in the endocrine system which regulates metabolism. The root, usually consumed in a pill, powder or juice form, is equivalent to a bowl of salad in terms of nutritional benefits. Popular as a pre-or post-workout snack, wheatgrass is rich in fibre, amino acids and enzymes that aid in the burning of fats, while increasing your metabolism.



6 UP YOUR PROTEIN INTAKE

Protein and essential amino acids are the building blocks of the body. “The body burns more calories digesting protein,” says Archana. Protein-rich foods have a high thermic effect (the energy used in digestion, absorption and distribution of nutrients) which allows the body to burn more calories to digest it. So instead of filling your plate with foods filled with carbohydrates, replace it with protein-rich foods like lean meat, turkey, fish, chicken breast, tofu, nuts, beans, eggs, and low-fat dairy products.



7 REFRESH WITH TEA

Green tea is touted for being rich in antioxidants, and is the main source of epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) which speeds up your brain and nervous system, causing your body to burn more calories. White tea also has similar health and nutritional benefits. >>



SNACK RIGHT

Eat four-six small meals through the day to keep your metabolism pumping all day long. “Extending the time between meals makes your body go into starvation mode, which decreases your metabolism, to save energy, and prevents it from burning fat,” says Hala. Archana agrees, saying that snacking can give your body a fuel boost, and prevent you from over-eating later on – which can often lead to lethargy if you eat the wrong food. Include healthy carbohydrates and protein in each snack – think peanut butter and banana, nuts and low fat yoghurt, hummous and baby carrots, or an apple with low-fat cheddar cheese when you are feeling peckish. The protein and carbohydrate combination helps regulate blood sugar, energy levels and feelings of satiety.

INCREASE YOUR FIBRE INTAKE

High-fibre foods provide one of the best ways to increase your metabolism, as fibre is a non-digestible carbohydrate which uses up energy to digest food, while boosting metabolism in the process. “It’s important to have at least 30 grams of fibre per day, in foods like oatmeal or brown rice, as it helps you burn fat, since the body takes time to break it down,” says Dana. Avocado, cabbages, carrots, sweet potato and spinach, are high in fibre, as well as other nutrients and healthy fats, making it beneficial for those looking to lose weight as well.



DRINK UP

The energy burning process of metabolism needs water to work effectively. According to Archana, the body needs water to process calories, and not drinking enough of it will only result in slowing down your metabolism. In order to encourage your liver to focus on metabolism, rather than water retention, make sure you drink a glass of water or any other unsweetened beverage before every meal and snack. Also, snack on fresh fruits and vegetables like watermelon and celery, which contain high levels of water. Hala suggests flavour enhancers like lemon slices or mint leaves for water, if you don’t like the taste of plain water. Dana also recommends having a cup of hot water with few drops of lemon juice after a meal, to get rid of toxins and improve digestion – lemon energises the body as it has vitamins and electrolytes, so lemon water is good for you at any time.



GULP DOWN OIL

A tablespoon of oil first thing in the morning might sound unpalatable, but Dana says it works wonders for your body. “Olive oil burns built-up fat in the body and boosts it simultaneously,” she says. Have it on its own, followed by a glass of water.

SLEEP WELL

A well-rested body is efficient in burning calories. “Get at least seven to eight hours of sleep per night, and try to develop a regular schedule, so you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day in order to help keep your metabolism at its optimum level,” says Archana. ^{GF}

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Dining options are aplenty with the all-day dining restaurant, Iru, serving international food; Flavours offering fusion Asian cuisine; Islander's Grill specialising in seafood; The Trio, which offers everything from Mediterranean to Middle Eastern fare; Bamboo serving up dishes from East Asia; and La Cremeria, a hotspot for homemade ice cream. The resort is also home to numerous bars and lounges such as The Wine Cellar, Bubble Lounge, Water's Edge, Reflections, and Fluid.

The winner can enjoy a three-night stay in a Beach villa, complete with a private covered terrace, outdoor rain showers and a spa tub overlooking the sundeck. The prize is inclusive of return transfers from the airport, breakfast at Iru Restaurant and a three-course dinner for two at The Trio Restaurant.

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The Howrah bridge is an iconic symbol of Kolkata

Food Safari: Bengal

We dip into the UAE's multicultural melting pot to discover a new cuisine from a foodie.

When we arrived at food blogger Ishita Saha's house at Jumeirah Beach Residence, we were greeted with jalebis (a deep-fried, syrup-soaked sweet) and pakodas (fritters) to have with hot chai 'tea'. This is a typical tea-time ritual across various Indian states, particularly Bengal, and we absolutely enjoyed the hospitality from this Bengali native. The founder of culinary travel and food blog, Ishita Unblogged, and former advertising executive wasn't catering to us all by herself though. She had little helpers, her daughters Zita and Zaina – known as the Z sisters on her blog – and her Filipina nanny and cook, who now knows how to cook Bengali cuisine, thanks to Ishita.

Ishita was born in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) but moved around every two years as her father was part of the Indian Administrative Services (IAS). Her father believed that education goes beyond the four walls of a school and took the family along wherever his work took him. Some of Ishita's fondest childhood memories are of the time she spent living in a big house with leafy gardens, the 'Magistrate's house' with her parents when they were in Kolkata, where they often had large feasts and get-togethers with famed authors and artists.

Her real love affair with the culinary offerings in the city, however, only began after she moved

out of this home to an apartment near the Hooghly River. While her life revolved around food, like most Bengalis, Ishita only stepped into the kitchen at 24 – when she shifted base to Sri Lanka after getting married. She moved to Dubai in 1999 and went away to Frankfurt for a few years, before heading back to Dubai in 2009. "Only when you're out of Bengal, you realise how much you know about the food, country and culture," she says. While Ishita once took for granted the home-cooked food prepared by her mother and grandmother, she now finds herself craving those traditional flavours all the time.

THE REGION

Bengal, on the eastern edge of the Indian subcontinent was separated in 1947 into Bangladesh, and West Bengal during the partition. However, there are cultural similarities within Bangladesh and West Bengal in terms of the cuisine and language (with only slight variations in dialect). The Eastern state of India, West Bengal, has 19 districts and has a varied landscape, ranging from the Himalayan foothills to the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, lending itself to rich lands ideal for vegetation and agricultural production.

The commercial city and capital of West Bengal

is Kolkata, which is where Ishita spent her teenage years as well. Not many know this, but Kolkata (which is over 300 years old) was once the capital of India, before the decision to transfer the capital to Delhi was made later in the 19th century. The city, which still has colonial influences, whether in the food, or the architecture, is located on the banks of Hooghly river.

Everything from rice and legumes, to high-quality tea (produced in the mountainous region of Darjeeling in Northern Bengal), coconut, chillies and mustard seeds are grown in the region, while sweet-water fish is widely available. Climatic conditions vary across the state, with spring taking place for a short period in the northern parts of the state, summer ranging from March to June, monsoon season from July to September, autumn from October to November and winter from December until February. Even though summers are dry, the Bengalis still experience a cool breeze most of the time, because of the Bay of Bengal.

Bengal has a number of rice paddy fields as the region experiences heavy annual rainfall, and is also one of India's largest producers of fruits and vegetables, and this is without a doubt a result of the favourable climate. According to Ishita, the traditional diet has developed according to what is grown locally and seasonally. For example, aubergines are produced during warmer months in the Hoogli district and Burdwan, as the soil is fertile and well-drained in these areas, and eaten in many different forms. Sugarcane, rice, wheat and legumes are grown in the Birbhum district (western region), potatoes and jute are grown in the Howrah district on the banks of the Hooghly river, while wheat, rapeseed, coconut, potatoes, and rice are grown in the North 24 Parganas district on the eastern banks of the Hooghly river.

THE CUISINE

They say the Bengalis have one of the sweetest sounding languages in the world, and it definitely seems so, upon hearing Ishita and her daughter chatter in Bengali. The sweetness extends to the palate as well, as Bengalis are renowned for their fondness for sweets, and even use sugar in many savoury dishes.

The assortment of dishes that make up a Bengali meal can intimidate a novice to it. And there's much more to it than sweets and fish, as we discover from Ishita. "The cuisine is quite elaborate, and is mostly based on what each district grows," she says. It has inherited culinary influences from the Marwaris (an ethnic group from Rajasthan) – who brought with them their

sweet-making skills – the British, Baghdadi Jews, and Indians who settled from various other states in West Bengal.

The flavour profile is quite subtly spiced, unlike many other better known cuisines from India, with a hint of sweetness. Rice and fish are the staples eaten daily – fish head is even used as a delicacy in a dal, and fish incorporated into all celebratory menus. Evidence of the importance of fish in the Bengali diet lies in the revered status enjoyed by Ilish (hilsa), a seasonal fish that was traditionally only available in the monsoons for a few weeks, its delicate flavour enjoyed in various forms, from fried fish to signature curries.

If you're familiar with Indian spices, you may have heard of pancphoron (five-spice mix) made up of mustard, fenugreek, cumin seeds, aniseed and black cumin, which is used with vegetables, fish, and lentils in Bengali food. "Mustard in many forms, particularly mustard oil, is used widely in all cooking," says Ishita, which adds a pungency to many dishes, an acquired taste for some.

A typical everyday lunch is a proper multi-course affair which commences with a dish like stir-fried bitter gourd or green leaves, followed by dal (lentils) and some form of fried vegetables like eggplant or potatoes. The meal then progresses to a fish curry, sometimes replaced with chicken or meat – but cooked in a typically Bengali style. A palate cleanser like green mangoes or tomato-based chutney is then served, after which the meal ends with a yoghurt or milk-based desserts. This elaborate meal is clearly an indication of Bengalis' love for food!

For special occasions or weekends, dishes like Kosha Mongsho (slow-cooked, spicy mutton or lamb curry) or Chingiri Malaikari (prawns with coconut milk-based curry) eaten with rice are popular. Even breakfast is a heavy affair, with lentils and luchi (a fried flatbread) being popular.

Desserts are a must at every meal, and most Bengali household's fridges are stacked with an array of milk-based sweets. In fact the Bengalis have such a sweet tooth that they actually stop by one of the neighbourhood sweet shops dotted across every town, after work to tuck into one or two, before taking a box home. Sandesh (milk-based hand shaped sweets in various flavours) are renowned in Bengal, and so are Rasgulla (sweet cottage cheese balls) and chum chum (tear-drop shaped rasgulla). The Bengalis also love their afternoon cup of Darjeeling tea with butter biscuits or sweets and snacks, a ritual that owes its origin to the colonial era.

Thanks to its cosmopolitan heritage, Kolkata has developed a culinary character all its own over and above its Bengali roots. "Kolkata food is so much more beyond Bengali food, as it's an amalgamation

of the many communities who settled there through ages," says Ishita. The cuisine has a lot of Mughal traits – especially because of the Lucknowi and Awadhi influence, as Nawab Mohammed Wajid Ali Shah Bahadur, the king of the state of Awadh (in Uttar Pradesh) was captured by the British and exiled to Kolkata. The king was extremely passionate about food and brought along with him cooking techniques and the use of ingredients like beef and spices such as mace and saffron. Nizami influences are seen in dishes like kati rolls (kebab wrapped in paratha), an iconic street food of the city, as well as the typical Kolkata biryani, made with chicken or mutton, along with a boiled egg and potatoes. Influences from China are also seen, because of the large population that settled in the area in the 18th century, to work at the Calcutta port. The Chinese community brought with them their own ingredients and flavours, leading to the creation of Calcutta Chinese cuisine, available at Chinatown in the city and at street food carts. Plus, Nepal is Bengal's neighbour which is why dishes like momos (stuffed dumplings) are also popular in Kolkata.

It's these variety of international flavours, as well as some traditional Bengali delicacies, that Kolkata residents love to try when they go out to indulge in street food. "I remember visiting Tiretti Bazaar for momos, and various other restaurants and stalls for kochuris (crisp, puffed bread with pea or potato stuffing) with Aloo sabzi (potatoes cooked in mustard oil), and of course, phuchkas (puffed small crisp parcels with potato and tamarind water) – Kolkata's version of the famed Indian gol gappa," she says.

THE CULTURE

The Bengalis initiate food to babies (usually five months old) through a big celebration called Annaprashan (First rice ceremony), during which they feed them rice pudding – an example of how important rice is to the culture. The pudding is also consumed on special occasions such as birthdays, and is something which brings back tons of childhood memories for Ishita. "My Dida (maternal grandma) used to make it, and it had a special aroma because of the way she cooked it – hovering over a small portable clay furnace and fanning it for an hour to set the fire right," she says.

Durga Puja (a four-day ceremony where clay idols of the Goddess Durga and her four children – Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Karthik are worshipped) is an important part of the Bengali



Ishita is a vocal ambassador of Bengali cuisine among those who know little about it

Baby Ishita at her Annaprashan (rice ceremony)

cultural calendar, and is centred around food as well. The festival is actually only celebrated by Bengalis, and usually sees them visiting friends and family on the fourth day of the festival, to distribute sweets and get blessings. Muri ghonto (fish head curry), Lal shak bhaja (stir fried red spinach) and Ilish Begun (Hilsa fish with eggplant) or Tilapia sorshe (mustard-style tilapia fish), and mutton curry are just some popular dishes eaten on the occasion.

Jamai Sashti, a day devoted to the son-in-law to bring him closer to the family, is another annual celebration unique to Bengal. A puja is offered for the son-in-law, after which he indulges in a selection of popular dishes like luchi, vegetable stir fry, pea pulao, prawn masala, and mishti doi, to name just a few.

Whenever Ishita travels back home, she enjoys going on culinary tours – even though she is familiar with the cuisine – as she explores areas she would never venture into all alone – she highly recommends this to tourists. Those travelling from the UAE can keep a lookout for a Kolkata Experience she will be launching with a travel company soon.

At the moment, there's only one restaurant in the UAE where you can try Bengali cuisine, Calcutta Fast Food in Al Khan, Sharjah, however if you do want to get a taste of the delicious dishes at home, you could just try these easy recipes that Ishita has adopted for modern kitchens. >>

TRY THESE



**Shorshe bata salmon
(Mustard salmon)**

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS **Easy**

- 4 salmon steaks, halved lengthwise
- 3 tbsp mustard paste
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ½ tsp Kashmiri powder (for colour)
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 3 tbsp mustard oil
- 4 green or red chillies, slit open
- Salt, to taste
- 2 banana leaves, for wrapping (cut into a convenient size to wrap each steak)

- 1** Grind the mustard paste along with the turmeric and cumin powder. Marinate the salmon steaks with turmeric and mustard paste for 30 mins.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 210C.
- 3** Place the marinated salmon steaks in banana leaves and add the salt, Kashmiri chilli powder and a bit of water. Pour mustard oil generously over the marinated salmon and wrap in a banana leaf with one chilli inside each wrap. Place in the oven for 20 mins and serve with or without the leaf, with steamed rice.



**Bhapa Mishti Doi (Steamed
sweet yoghurt)**

SERVES 8 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 35-40 MINS

- 350g sweet condensed milk
- 410g evaporated milk
- 1l plain yoghurt
- ½ tsp saffron strands

- 1** Whisk or beat the sweet condensed milk, evaporated milk and yoghurt until frothy. Pour into small ceramic pots and sprinkle saffron strands on top.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180C. Fill a large baking tray with water and put each pot with the mix in it so that the water is half way up the pots. Do not cover the baking dish. Cook for 30-35 mins, if it hasn't set allow a couple more mins. Refrigerate this for 2-3 hrs. It's ready when the top and the edges start browning a little. Insert a toothpick lightly to see if it is done (the tooth pick should come out clean. It might be a little wobbly, but refrigerate for 5-6 hrs or overnight to set completely). **GF**

Nominate now!



PRESENTING THE 2014 BBC GOOD FOOD ME AWARDS

Known for celebrating the best foodie brands and experiences in the region, the fifth annual BBC Good Food Middle East awards will open for 2nd round of voting on October 15.

THE CATEGORIES

FINE DINING

- * RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR - DUBAI*
- * RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR - ABU DHABI*
- * BEST NEW RESTAURANT - DUBAI*
(Opened on or after January 2014)
- * BEST NEW RESTAURANT - ABU DHABI*
(Opened on or after January 2014)
- * RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR - DOHA
- * CHEF OF THE YEAR*
- * BEST EUROPEAN RESTAURANT
- * BEST ASIAN RESTAURANT

RESTAURANTS

- * BEST CONTEMPORARY BRITISH
- * BEST LATIN AMERICAN
- * BEST INDIAN
- * BEST MIDDLE EASTERN
- * BEST STEAKHOUSE
- * BEST BRUNCH
- * BEST ITALIAN
- * BEST SEAFOOD
- * BEST EXPERIENTIAL DINING VENUE
- * BEST SUSTAINABLE RESTAURANT

CASUAL DINING

- * BEST INTERNATIONAL
- * BEST INDIAN
- * BEST ASIAN
- * BEST MIDDLE EASTERN
- * BEST CAFÉ

* BEST FOOD BLOGGER 

INGREDIENTS

- * FAVOURITE SUPERMARKET
- * FAVOURITE SPECIALITY FOOD STORE/MARKET
- * FAVOURITE BRAND FOR STORE CUPBOARD ITEMS

HOME COOKING

- * FAVOURITE DAIRY BRAND
- * FAVOURITE OLIVE OIL BRAND
- * FAVOURITE TEA BRAND
- * FAVOURITE COFFEE BRAND
- * FAVOURITE JUICE BRAND

ACCESSORIES

- * FAVOURITE LARGE KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND
- * FAVOURITE SMALL KITCHEN APPLIANCE BRAND
- * FAVOURITE TABLEWARE STORE

Creating new benchmarks in the industry, the vote-based awards recognise the top restaurants and food-related brands and stores. Log on to bbcgoodfoodme.com/awards/2014 to get your favourite restaurants and food brands of the region, into the running.

HOW IT WORKS

In the nomination phase, which runs from August 4 -September 30, we are calling consumers to nominate their favourites in each category online. After September 30, the top ten nominees in each category (with the highest votes) will be listed on our website. Between October 15 and November 27, consumers will then get to vote again for the winner, from that list. The winners will be revealed at our gala awards event in January 2015.

** Winners for Restaurant of the Year (Dubai & Abu Dhabi), Best New Restaurant (Dubai & Abu Dhabi), Best sustainable restaurant and Chef of the Year will be chosen by an independent judging panel.*

Mystery Box sponsor



Official hotel partner



Voting prize sponsor



Contributing sponsor



Official radio station





WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE BRANDS TO COOK WITH?



From the pantry staple you can't live without, or your go-to supermarket of choice, to the kitchen appliance you swear by, and everything in between... this is your chance to recognise and reward the brands you love!

The only awards of its kind in the region, that celebrates the best food and kitchen brands, the BBC Good Food ME awards is now open for nominations.

Nominate now on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com/awards/2014

VOTE AND WIN

A CULINARY TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA
with Cape Grace hotel, Cape Town!

Everyone who votes will be entered into a raffle draw to win a 3-night luxury getaway for two with a wine tour, chef-guided food tour, whisky tasting experience, wine pairing dinner and spa treats too!



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A 'capital' time for foodies!

One of the world's greatest restaurant festivals is set to make its debut in Abu Dhabi next month. We have the lowdown on the event.

UAE residents are buzzing with excitement in the run up to the inaugural Taste of Abu Dhabi, to be held from November 6 - 8. After seven successful years in Dubai, the alfresco food, drinks and music festival makes its way to the capital to showcase the city's growing range of culinary offerings. The jam-packed festival promises to be a haven for food lovers as they explore some of the city's top restaurants, learn tricks of the trade from local and celebrity chefs, and enjoy live entertainment. Here's a sneak peek at some of the highlights of the show.

RESTAURANTS

Several of Abu Dhabi's signature restaurants will be showcasing their culinary chops with small tasting plates. Visitors will get the chance to sample an array of cuisine from Indian and Japanese to French and Belgian. Participating restaurants include Turquoiz, Angar, Koi, Carluccio's, Noli's Café, Cafe D'Alsace, Noodle Box, Flooka and Rozanah, to name a few. Here's our pick of the top spots not to be missed:

USHNA Chef Sandeep Ail will be cooking up a storm at this fine dining Indian eatery's festival stand, offering a selection of tasty regional classics with a modern twist.

VILLA TOSCANA The passionate Chef Stefano Viola leads the team from St. Regis Abu Dhabi's Italian restaurant. The authentic spot showcases the finest seasonal ingredients through regional dishes from Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna.

SAFINA Following the rebranding of Monte-Carlo Beach Club to Saadiyat Beach Club, the resort's main restaurant continues to serve fresh fare from the French and Italian Riviera and the Levant.

CHEF LINE-UP

Over at the Chef's Theatre, an impressive line-up of international celebrity chefs will be cooking up a storm. Catch them in action as they give live demonstrations, challenge visitors to culinary contests and answer your questions:

- A regular star at Taste of London, **Jun Tanaka** hosting live cooking demonstrations at the Chef's Theatre. The Japanese-British chef, who's best known for his current Food Network programme, Street Kitchen, tells us why he's looking forward to the event from him at the event:



• Taste festivals all around the world represent the very best the city has to offer. The culinary scene in Abu Dhabi is developing quickly with international chefs and restaurateurs opening up in the city - this makes it an exciting time to launch an event like this. I'm most excited about tasting all the different dishes from the restaurants and meeting the chefs that work in them. •

- Are you baking mad? Don't miss master Pâtissier, celebrity chef and author **Eric Lanlard** to get baking tips from the cake boy himself. Lanlard will be joined by MasterChef UK winner Steven Edwards, who will be sharing the secrets to his simple cuisine.



- The Spice Prince of India himself, **Reza Mahammad** will be bringing his trademark enthusiasm to the Chef's Theatre, while the host of new Travel Channel series 'Jonathan Phang's Gourmet Trains', **Jonathan Phang**, completes the celebrity chef star cast.

- Over at the Cookery School section, teen sensation 18-year-old Emirati baker **Bader Al Awadhi** will be showing off his skills alongside some of the city's top resident chefs.



ENTERTAINMENT

The entertainment stage comes alive with a host of local bands, musicians and DJs all weekend long. The little ones won't be short of options either – local 'edu-tainment' company Funky Monkeys hosts a play area, cooking classes and fairground rides. The tented Family Zone offers an alcohol-free section for families to unwind and soak up the atmosphere, or you can head over to the open-air Vox cinema to catch a family-friendly flick.

MEET & GREET!

We'll be there at Taste of Abu Dhabi, so come by the BBC Good Food ME stand and say hello! There will be fun activities and fabulous offers on subscriptions, so you don't want to miss it.

TASTE OF ABU DHABI FAST FACTS

Dates: November 6-8

Place: Du Arena, Yas Island

Timings: 4pm-11pm on November 6, 12pm-11pm on November 7, 12pm-10pm on November 8

Ticket prices: Standard adult tickets are available from Dhs65 if purchased online or Dhs80 at the door. VIP tickets are available from Dhs170 if purchased online or Dhs190 at the door. Free entry for children under 12.

Add a touch of class to your Taste experience by booking a VIP package – tickets include fast track entry, access to the VIP Lounge, three food and beverage vouchers and more.

Number of restaurants: Twenty

Exhibitors: A range of food brands will be showcasing their offerings including Sushi Central, Hey Sugar and Shocka's Coconut Hub.

Chef demos: A host of local and international chefs will be hosting culinary demos and master classes at the Cookery School and Chef's Theatre.

Competitions: A host of prizes will be on offer from weekend getaways to autographed recipe books. Little ones can join the fancy dress party on November 7 while one lucky winner will take home nearly Dhs10,000 worth of restaurant vouchers.

Find out more from
www.tasteabudhabi.com



MY KITCHEN Eric Lanlard

Master pâtissier Eric Lanlard shows Holly Brooke-Smith around his sleek west London kitchen.

Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Born in Brittany, Eric Lanlard trained as a chocolatier in Luxembourg before moving to the UK in 1989 to set up his own business. He has since made wedding cakes for Madonna, Liz Hurley and Claudia Schiffer. He runs Cake Boy, a cake boutique and cookery school in south-west London, and lives nearby with his partner, Paul. He has written five books, including *Tart It Up!* and *Chocolat* (both Mitchell Beazley).

When did you move in?

It was three years ago. We weren't looking to move. I just saw the house in a magazine one Saturday when we were having breakfast at Cake Boy. It was the first time it had been advertised and there were only a couple of photos of this

kitchen space. We came and had a look around and thought 'we want it'!

It's very stylish! Do you find it practical?

The first time I came here, I thought 'this is a typical designer place' with no sockets or anything useful. At the time I could see a metal disc on the counter surface, but I was too embarrassed to ask the estate agent what it was – I thought maybe it was something to put the rubbish in. It was when I came back a second time that I looked in the cupboard and realised it was a whole bank of plug sockets that rises up out of the counter. So I was very happy.

Do you have lots of countertop gadgets?

I'm getting a bit addicted to my sous vide

machine. It's my new thing that I really love using. I'm not into silly gadgets – I just like having quality equipment. However, I did buy a waffle maker last year and it's sat in the cupboard ever since – I don't like it when that happens. I like good-quality cookware and bakeware, and that's it.

What do you cook on?

The oven is great, it's a Gaggenau and it's nice – very wide. If I do a tiered cake I can do it all at the same time. It really holds the temperature very well and heats up very quickly, so you don't have to preheat it for hours. It's a great thing. I can't get used to the electric hobs though – everything overboils. I trained with gas, and in all my previous homes, we had gas as well.

GET THE LOOK



Make individual desserts in these Le Creuset Mini ceramic cocottes. Dhs460 (set of three pieces) at Tavola.

This Milk frother is perfect for your morning cup of coffee. Dhs337 at Lakeland.



Eric loves sous vide cooking, and so will you, with this Lavide LV.80 Sous-Vide water bath. Dhs3,295 at vauxxia.com.



Eric's collection of Le Creuset dishes are perfect for individual soufflés and chocolate puddings

Eric's wine fridge has been hijacked by chocolate and his Lindt bunny – he says it's the perfect temperature for storing chocolate at about 6C



The island unit (main photograph) has a neat multi-plug socket that rises up – ideal for gadgets like Eric's trusty hand whisk and milk frother

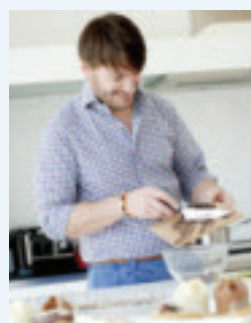


Where have you cooked previously?

When I cooked for the French Navy I was on a big ship, but we had a tiny little kitchen. I was working on the navy's flagship, as the captain's private pastry chef. It was the chef and me in a tiny kitchen. Of course, the chef had to take most of the kitchen, because that's how chefs behave! I just had one marble slab and a sink – we'd do everything like the washing-up and making cakes. There was no air conditioning or anything – at the end of the day, it was still a battleship.

That sounds challenging!

It was definitely an experience. We were entertaining a lot as we went around the world. One Easter it was 40C in the Caribbean. I had to lock myself in the freezer to make chocolate eggs. I jammed the door with a big spoon so that the light would stay on, then I made the eggs and we pulled them out at the last second to make sure they didn't melt.




ERIC'S BAKING TIPS

- Invest in an oven thermometer. It doesn't matter how expensive your oven is, you always need to check the temperature. It will make all the difference to your results.
- Always try to take your ingredients out of the fridge an hour before, so everything is at the same temperature. If they're too cold, it will take too long to incorporate, and if you add cold eggs to butter, it might curdle.
- Go for unrefined sugar, which is less processed and has more of a treacly taste.

Do you entertain much?

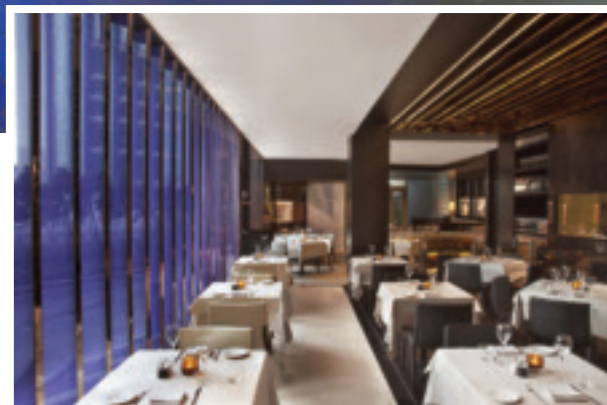
I like doing things rustic – when I entertain I keep it simple. I work every Saturday so if I want to do a dinner straight after work, the last thing I want to do is Michelin-starred food. Usually it will be something that's been sat in the pot for hours or from the day before, a pot roast or something like that so it's easy to put together when it's time to serve.

Do you use all the space?

The central station is double-width, so it's great. I can roll pastry on one end and, when I'm entertaining, I can lay out all the plates. There's a built-in double sink, which is big enough. In our previous house, I hated the sink – you couldn't even fit a frying pan in it. Our sink now is stainless steel, and good for heavy pans. I love cooking with old-fashioned iron pans. 

WIN!
A luxurious weekend
stay at The W
Doha Hotel and
Residences, worth
Dhs7,500

**One lucky winner can
enjoy a two-night stay,
inclusive of breakfast, a
gourmet dinner, and an
indulgent brunch.**



This stylish hotel located in the heart of Doha is one of the hottest spots in the city which exudes a trendy, eclectic vibe. Hotel facilities include a gorgeous pool area complete with private cabanas, Fit Fitness Centre and the Bliss Spa (the first and only one in the region), and is also the perfect spot to kick back and indulge in a good meal. Dine at the award-winning Market by Jean-Georges for international food, or Spice Market for a taste of South East Asian street food – both owned by 3 Michelin-star chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten – La Spiga by Paper Moon to try Italian, the W Café for coffee and pastries, or Wahm lounge for cocktails and DJ beats.

One winner can take their partner to The W Doha Hotel and Residences to enjoy a two-night stay, inclusive of breakfast at Market by Jean-Georges, dinner at La Spiga by Paper Moon, and brunch at Spice Market.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

How many restaurants is The W Doha Hotel and Residences home to?

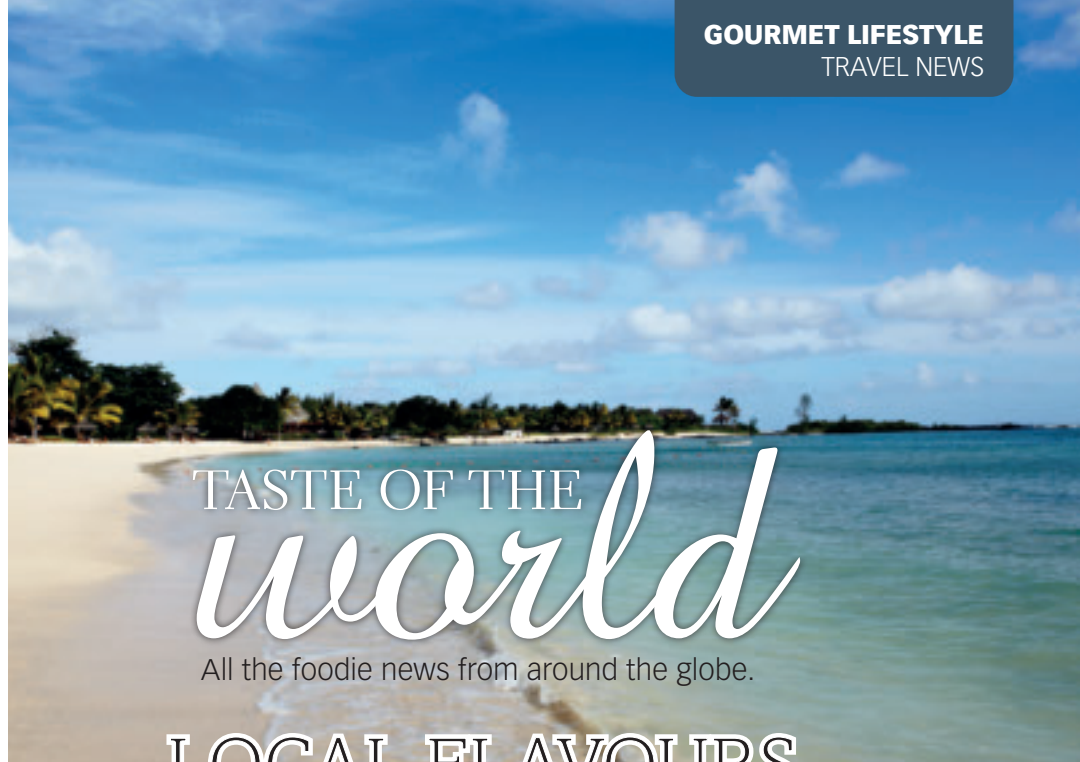
Scan this QR code
to go straight to
our website. ↗



*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

IN-FLIGHT FINE DINING

Raising the bar for on-board dining yet again, Qantas has introduced its fresh new seasonal menu for premier cabin passengers highlighting the best of Australian produce. With a paddock-to-plate approach, the menus, designed by Australian celebrity chef Neil Perry, feature Aussie springtime specialties like an asparagus, green peas and Ligurian olive salad, served with fresh South Australian Woodside goat curd, on flights from Sydney and Melbourne into Dubai, while their flights from London to Dubai highlight the autumn flavours of England with dishes like braised duck leg with orange and thyme, broccoli and garlic potato purée. While we'd like to start digging in as soon as we're boarded, passengers can in fact, choose when they eat what, from their wide-ranging menu. www.qantas.com.



TASTE OF THE world

All the foodie news from around the globe.

LOCAL FLAVOURS

Mauritian cuisine is a lip-smacking amalgamation of multiple influences, and there's no better way to discover it, than with La Kaze Mama, a new culinary offering at Shanti Maurice resort. Taking authenticity to a whole other level, the experience involves having the grandmother of one of the resort staff members come in to cook for guests in an outdoor pergola, while regaling them with stories of life on the island and the cuisine. The menu includes traditional Mauritian bread, salads, curries and homemade sweets, washed down with tropical cocktails, enjoyed in a cosy alfresco setting lit by wood fires. Now that's what magical holiday memories are made of! La Kaze Mama is priced at US\$20 per person, US\$42 for non-resident guests, room rates start from US\$1,059. Visit www.shantimaurice.com.

Monaco Magic

Make the French Riviera your destination of choice this month – at the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort, you can sign up for a cookery class with chef Marcel Ravin, to enjoy a fun afternoon of hands-on cooking in the Las Brisas restaurant kitchen, followed by a champagne dinner along with your guest, to try your own creations. What's more, if you book in for their Gourmet package, you can get a € 200 voucher to spend at any of the resort complex's 20 restaurants – which include everything from Michelin starred offerings from Alain Ducasse, to casual brasserie-style dining options. Cooking classes are priced at €220 (around Dhs1,040) plus cocktails and dinner for 2, available on October 11, 18 and 25. Gourmet package prices start from € 342 per night, visit montecarlosbm.com.



PACK A SNACK!

Planning a trip can be hard when travelling with kids, or if you have dietary restrictions, with limitations on what food is available on the go. That's why we always recommend carrying some healthy snacks around, whether it's to survive long flights or serious pavement-pounding. Here are some great ideas from Organic Foods & Café:

• **Martin's Marvelous Rosemary Lavender gluten-free crisps, Dhs32.**



• **Helps kids Rehydration tea, Dhs44.**



• **Galette di Riso rice cakes (with salt) Dhs6.25.**



• **Orgran Toasted Corn Dippers, Dhs13.50.**





GOURMET SAFARI

When the natural wonders of Kenya are experienced in intimate luxury, and you get to take your tastebuds on adventure too, then it makes for an unforgettable experience, says Sudeshna Ghosh.

“Welcome home,” said the hotel manager to us as we walked into Giraffe Manor. Somehow, it really felt like a homecoming – although I’d never been here before – and not just for the stately yet homely warmth of this boutique property on the outskirts of Nairobi, but for the call of the motherland that seems to instinctively take over when you arrive in Africa. Whether it’s the addictive adrenaline rush of spotting an elusive big cat on safari; the huge expanse of savannah land, humbling in its vastness; or the welcoming warmth of the people – there is something about Africa that makes you feel like this is right, this is exactly where you should be at that point in time.

The inviting comforts of the Giraffe Manor don’t hurt either. Dating back to 1932, this former private home built in a classic English hunting lodge style, and an icon of Nairobi, has just ten luxurious rooms (each named after one of the giraffes), overlooking the Giraffe Centre it is set within. Part of the Safari Collection, an exclusive group of properties across Africa owned by safari and conservation veterans, the Carr-Hartleys, this

is an iconic Nairobi hotel recreating the elegance of the colonial era with perfection. Four poster beds, claw-foot baths, cosy nooks and corners with plump sofas just waiting to be sunk into with a book from the library, Africa-inspired memorabilia adding a personal touch to the décor, and the recurring giraffe theme that is ubiquitous across the hotel – whether it’s in the cushions, canvases, crockery, or stained glass window panels – are all par for course. But that’s not what makes this place unique. It’s the giraffes themselves. The Giraffe Centre is home to a handful of endangered Rothschild giraffes, who roam freely within the complex, and are usually very happy to join guests for breakfast. In fact, alongside the delicious breakfast offerings of fruit, cereal, eggs to order and pancakes, the menu also includes a jar of giraffe food pellets – which the friendly animals are eager to partake of, poking their long necks in through the windows. A wakeup call from curious Lynn (one of the seven giraffes) snuffling around your first floor window (a reminder of exactly how tall they are!) looking for treats – which are also provided in each room

– is an experience that cannot be recreated anywhere else in the world. Breakfast then becomes a lively affair in the communal courtyard with everyone busy feeding the giraffes even as they feed themselves, competing for their hugs and kisses, and photo ops galore, while the pack of ugly yet incredibly cute warthogs that also call this home, run around underfoot.

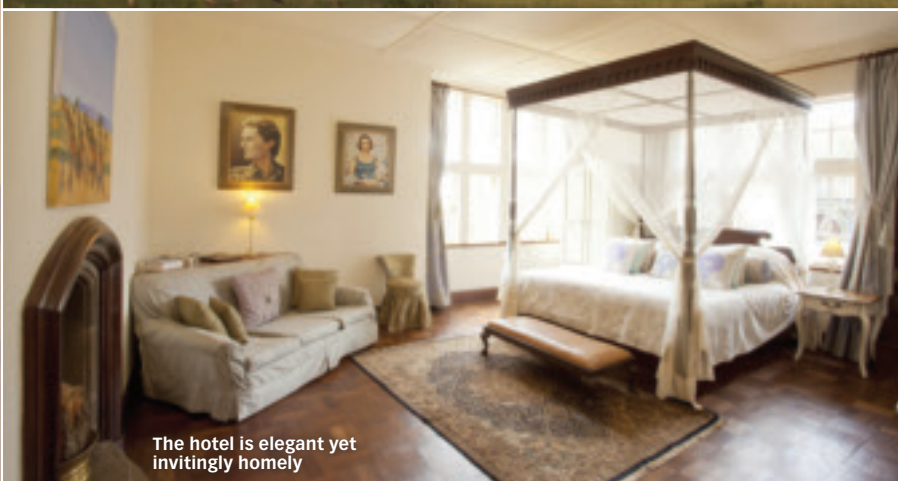
After such an exciting start to the day, you can head out to visit nearby attractions worth checking out, such as the renowned Karen Blixen museum, and Kazuri beads, a bead factory and store providing employment to disadvantaged local women. An equally attractive option is to spend your time taking in the serene surroundings of the 140-acre estate, enjoying the creations of the acclaimed chef, known for heading up one of Nairobi’s finest kitchens – whether it’s a light soup and scrummy fish kebabs with shredded cabbage rice, followed by a refreshing homemade sorbet for lunch; a civilised afternoon tea overlooking the grounds enjoying home-baked cakes and bakes; or a gourmet sit-down candle-lit dinner feasting on asparagus and quails eggs with parmesan shavings,



Friendly giraffes patrol the grounds of Giraffe Manor



Dining at Giraffe Manor is always an elegant affair



The hotel is elegant yet invitingly homely



Breakfast with the giraffes is a regular ritual

chicken stuffed with chorizo with red pepper sauce, and chocolate mousse.

With this combination of urban pursuits with wildlife – the giraffes, while accustomed to human encounters, are, after all, wild animals, and you're briefed on safety protocols around them right at the outset – provides the perfect introduction to Africa. As it is standard practice to usually spend at least a night in Nairobi before heading out to the bush, there's no better place to do it than here, away from the hurly burly of the city.

Into the bush

Wildlife reserves are aplenty in Kenya. What is a little more rare is a private conservancy spread over 17,500 acres, with just one lodge set within it. The Solio Lodge, in the privately-owned Solio conservancy, East Africa's largest rhino breeding centre located in the Laikipia region at the foothills of the impressive Aberdare mountain range, is as exclusive as an African safari can get. The lodge has just six rooms – you do the math of the humans-to-animals ratio here!

While on safari, the ultimate luxury is that of

one-on-one time with the wildlife, and while it isn't uncommon here to go for game drives for hours with no other car in sight, and encounter a pride of lions within minutes of leaving the lodge, the luxurious comforts of the lodge are no less impressive. The thatched cottage-style villas combine the best of rustic charm to blend in with the environment, with contemporary design. The luxury here lies not in over-the-top opulence, but rather in space – each room, if you can call them that, is massive (the bathrooms are the size of an average Dubai apartment!) and boasts floor-to-ceiling glass windows to maximise the views, as well as thoughtfully curated African art and artefacts dotted around the space for decoration. My tip? Opt for Room 6, which has a watering hole right outside the bathroom, where you're as likely to have a herd of water buffaloes cast a watchful eye as you brush your teeth, as you are to find a hippo have a leisurely bath as you shower!

The attention to detail is tremendous, not just in the décor but in the personalised service – the fires in your room are lit when you step out for dinner, beds are made up with hot water bags, the

minibar is stocked with whatever you want by your personal room butler, and you can dine where and when you choose...

While the dining room in the common lounge area is lovely both by day and by night, lunch really is best enjoyed on the outdoor deck overlooking the reserve. As you tuck into the fresh, light Mediterranean-inspired dishes, whether it's a healthy beetroot and apple salad, a delicious caprese, an indulgent homemade chicken liver pâté or a piping hot pasta with fresh basil and tomato, expect a zebra or antelope to wander past looking on from a distance.

But that feels tame compared to the bush breakfasts you can enjoy on your morning game drives – after a few hours of spotting lionesses lounging on trees or enjoying a kill, rhinos grazing on the grasslands, and the herbivores darting around, your friendly guide parks in a suitable spot, and voila, as if by magic, tables and chairs are set out, and the sizzling sound of fresh eggs being fried fills the air. This is no soggy sandwich on-the-go kind of breakfast – it's a full, delicious hot breakfast, complete with cereal, fruit, eggs made to order, and fresh coffee, >>



Daytime dining is best enjoyed alfresco at Solio lodge



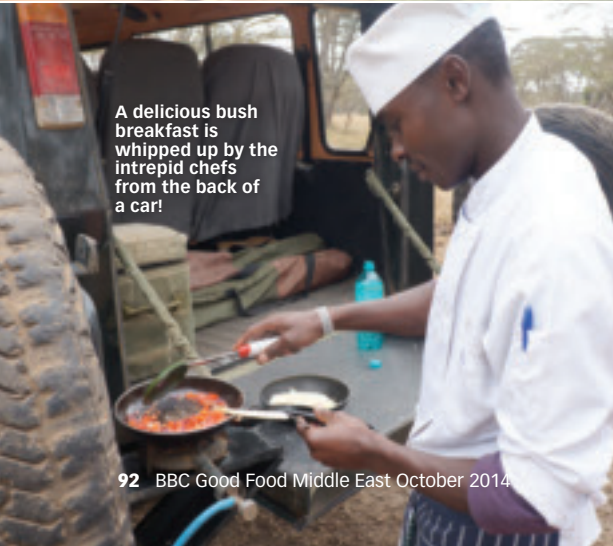
The cottages at Solio are designed to maximise the views



Plot-to-plate dining at its best!



The lodge blends in seamlessly with its surroundings



A delicious bush breakfast is whipped up by the intrepid chefs from the back of a car!



An organic herb and vegetable garden provides fresh produce for the Solio lodge kitchens

tossed up by the chef from the back of a 4X4! It feels like an extreme privilege to be enjoying these luxuries surrounded by the natural habitat of the wildlife. Dinner is usually enjoyed communally with all the guests, after social drinks by the fireside, and to mix things up a bit, the menu ranges from Indian curries to delicious steaks with mustard roast potatoes and candied butternut squash, or even local East African delicacies (usually arranged on request).

The lodge's manager Ava takes a personal interest in the kitchens, and ensures most of the produce is sourced as locally as possible, to make the most of the abundant and high-quality produce available in the region, including from the lodge's in-house herb and vegetable garden, which grows everything from lettuce, basil and kaffir lime to tomatoes and eggplant. This results in consistently delicious food, using fresh ingredients put together with care – a very important of a luxury safari experience. This, for me, would be reason enough to revisit – if the stylish luxury or fantastic game viewing opportunities offered at Solio weren't enough.

Glamping getaway

Kenya is almost synonymous with the Masai Mara, one of the world's best known wildlife reserves, which is a quick flight from Laikipia. Tucked away discreetly amidst a lush jungle enclave of the Masai Mara, Sala's Camp is not only set in one of the farthest reaches of the Mara – the Serengeti is within spitting distance of the camp, and you can easily end up crossing over to Tanzania by accident while on a game drive! – it is as remote as it gets. To enjoy the vast Masai Mara but escape from the busloads of holidaymakers – after all, on safari, the only herds you want to get close to are wildebeest or buffalo, not tourists! – this 'hidden camp' is the place to go.

One of the best times to visit the Masai Mara is of course, when the annual Great Migration moves here from the Serengeti plains, and this lodge is well positioned to offer incomparable access to this wondrous natural phenomenon – with the Mara river famed for its made-famous-by-Nat Geo river crossings just a short drive away, and massive plains thronging with the wildebeest during the season. But, there's plenty of resident game and other attractions to tempt in visitors all year round as well.

Not least the actual camp. The unfenced tented camp blends in seamlessly with its surroundings, where you can expect to go to sleep lulled (!) by the sounds of lions roaring in the distance, and have the occasional leopard passing by at night; safety is of paramount importance though, so guests are not allowed to walk out of their tents



Fresh produce features heavily in all meals



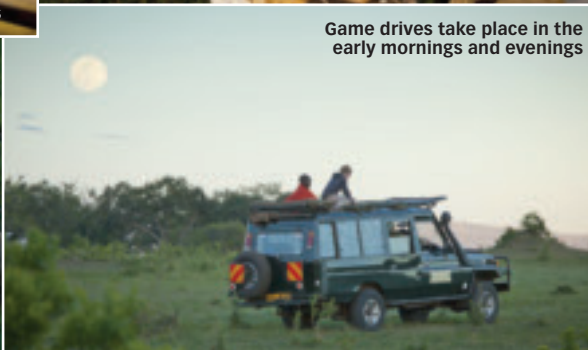
No compromises need to be made even when breakfasting in the wild



The Masai Mara is home to startlingly beautiful landscapes



Seeing wildlife in their natural habitat is unforgettable



Game drives take place in the early mornings and evenings



The tents at Sala's camp are luxe and elegant

after dark unless accompanied by a Masai guide.

Without compromising on any mod cons, 'glamping' is at its luxurious best in here, where you'll find yourself ensconced in luxury – not just the hot shower, proper toilets, and warm beds kind of luxury, but stylish Africa-inspired furniture and silk cushions kind of luxury. With the option of sitting out on your outdoor deck on a colonial-style armchair with a drink of your choice served whenever you feel like, you'd find it hard to tear yourself away. But when you do venture out, you'll be rewarded with wildlife sightings that will excite the most jaded travellers, and incomparable vistas of the reserve.


One of the best ways to enjoy this vista is over sundowners, when, after an afternoon game drive, the driver parks on a raised hillock, pulls out a makeshift bar table from the back of the SUV, and chairs and tables, Mary Poppins-style, and serves up drinks and nibbles to enjoy while taking in the quintessential African sunset. These driver guides tend to be quite versatile folks, as come morning, they are equally adept at turning chef, when they cook up a hot breakfast of eggs and bacon, for a bush breakfast in the middle of a long morning game drive.

But while eating and drinking in the middle of the wilderness has its own charm, the lovely alfresco lunches and cosy dinners in the mess tent – where each night the table is set up in a different theme, flamboyantly showing off African handicrafts – are the meals to really look forward to. In spite of being in such a remote place, the kitchens manage to produce gourmet European-style meals to match any leading restaurant, and dietary restrictions are well taken care of, with allergen- and intolerant-friendly food options

provided for those who need it.

Whether it's creative salads and quiches (balsamic roasted couscous with beetroot and thyme, anyone?), succulent, beautifully marinated meats, or dessert offerings that can range from fresh fruit platters to decadent banoffee pies – the Kenyan head chef is very talented in the pastry department! – mealtimes, which are usually a social affair, become something to look forward to. While sitting by the fireside swapping stories of the day before dinner is de rigueur, on some evenings, weather permitting, the camp staff even set up dinner on the riverbank the camp overlooks, to make for a truly magical experience.

Here again, produce is sourced as locally and sustainably as possible – from vegetables, including the indigenous tree tomato (tamarillo) grown on-site that lends itself perfectly to a refreshing lunchtime sorbet, and the excellent cheese that comes from a nearby farm, to the camp manager even having his own beehive to produce honey in-house.

Not everything always runs smoothly though. Be prepared, as, for all that it offers, Africa can still be unpredictable and disorganised in many ways, and some things we might take for granted in more developed countries, can't always be taken for granted here (for example, flight schedules might change last minute, the wi fi can be unreliable...). But, to enjoy raw, beautiful Africa up close, and yet in a way where every effort is sincerely made to ensure you are as insulated from any possible discomforts as possible, it is important to put yourself in good hands. And to take things a little 'Pole, Pole' ('Slowly, slowly in Swahili) – that is, after all, part of the destination's charm. 

TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE:

- Air Arabia offers convenient direct flights between Sharjah and Nairobi daily. With affordable prices, timings that are perfect for connections with local flights in Kenya (all flights into wildlife reserves are daytime), some of the most comfortable seats around, and the option of buying wholesome food on-board, this is one of the best flying options you can find. Tickets cost from Dhs1,400 return, visit www.airarabia.com.
- Within Kenya, short flights are necessary to get from one lodge to another. Safari Link is one of the leading local flight operators, offering smooth flights on small aircraft, efficient flight connections, and professional service, between various airstrips across east Africa. Ticket prices vary depending on the destination, starting from around US\$150 (around Dhs550). Charter flights are also offered, visit www.flysafarilink.com.

STAYING THERE:

- Giraffe Manor, Solio Lodge, and Sala's Camp are all part of the Safari Collection group. Room rates start from about US\$520 per person at Giraffe Manor; US\$640 at Solio lodge; and US\$440 per person at Sala's camp, including all meals, game drives, laundry and other select activities. Rates vary according to season, additional charges apply, and special packages are also available. Visit www.thesafaricollection.com.

Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.



WIN! DINING VOUCHERS FOR SALERO TAPAS AND BODEGA, KEMPINSKI HOTEL MALL OF THE EMIRATES, WORTH DHS900.

Three lucky winners can get a dining voucher worth DHS300 each, to feast on a selection of Spanish delicacies at this atmospheric restaurant. Salero Tapas and Bodega is the place to head to for sharing platters of traditional tapas with a modern twist – think paella, hot and cold tapas like gazpacho and fried eggplant with cane honey.



WIN! FRIDAY BRUNCH VOUCHERS AT OCACTI, PIER 7, WORTH OVER DHS1,180.

Two winners can take their friends along to this modern Mexican-style late afternoon brunch, located at the newest culinary hub in the city, Pier 7 at Dubai Marina. A selection of mouth-watering snacks such as enchiladas, nachos and tacos are served to the table, before diners choose their mains, and end the meal with a platter of three desserts.



WIN! TICKETS TO WATCH OPERA IN THE PARK AT WAFI DUBAI, WORTH OVER DHS1,150.

Three winners can take a partner along to the highly anticipated Opera in the Park show which will be returning to the rooftop gardens on November 13 and 14. Enjoy a delicious picnic basket packed with treats such as Scottish salmon with apple, celery and walnut salad, artisan bread, cheese, farmhouse sandwiches, and prawn cocktail, followed by double chocolate mousse cake, while watching the Opera performances with a jazz twist.

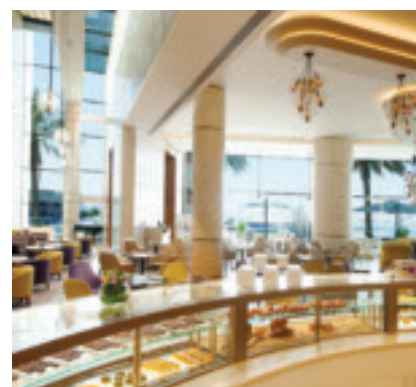


WIN! A DHS500 DINING VOUCHER AT MAZINA, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA.

Get your weekend started on the right note by taking a friend along to the Steak and Sushi night which takes place every Thursday at the hotel's all-day dining restaurant. Choose from a selection of succulent, high quality cuts of meat prepared to your liking, and indulge in freshly made sushi as well.

WIN! A DINING VOUCHER AT CHOIX PATISSERIE AND RESTAURANT PAR PIERRE GAGNAIRE, INTERCONTINENTAL DUBAI FESTIVAL CITY, WORTH DHS300.

One winner can take a friend to this restaurant and café, to indulge in an assortment of decadent French pastries like éclairs, afternoon tea, finger sandwiches, and an array of coffees. The restaurant also features a breakfast, lunch and dinner menu for those looking for a substantial meal.



To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.


*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



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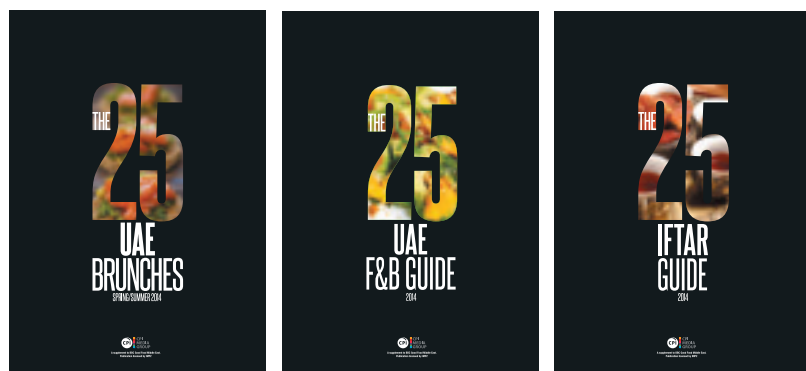
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33-year old Emirati national, **ARWA A. LOOTAH** was born and bred in Dubai, and previously worked in the art field before launching her cookery blog *La Mère Culinaire* – through which she also sells freshly baked cookies and preserves. Arwa lives in Muhaisna with her husband and two boys, and has always been passionate about art, design and cooking. The blogger took on cooking full time to cater to her family's evolving palate, and is on a mission to bring creativity to home kitchens.

Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the region's foodie community, one blog post at a time.

About the blog

✱ I started the blog because I felt that creative side missing from my life after I stopped working. I didn't have much time to paint after my first baby, and so I decided to be creative in the kitchen instead. Once I started cooking, I thought, why not write about it? There were hardly any Emirati food bloggers at that time, so I wanted to share my recipes which have an Emirati twist, with the world.

LaMereCulinaire.com was launched four years ago, and it covers all my food experiences, recipes, and everything about the Emirati food culture. I also sell freshly baked cookies through the blog, in flavours such as karak, lemon lavender and rose pistachio with white chocolate.

COOKING TIP

Always toast your spices when cooking, to bring out its aroma.



Food luxury

Definitely saffron – I like to splurge on high quality saffron.

A foodie personality I'd love to dine with...

Celebrity chef Vineet Bhatia, because I like his innovativeness with Indian cuisine. If I had to cook one dish for him, it would be Salmon fogah – a spiced Emirati rice dish with salmon on top. It's not typical to make this dish with salmon, but I fell in love with it, and learnt the recipe, after my mother made it for me.

“I'm pregnant, so lately I've been munching on apricots as my midday snack!”



My inspiration stems from:

Everything around me! Whether it's a single herb, spice, or a fruit I love.



Food is an art because

To make good dishes, you need to be creative in flavour pairing, taste, and of course, master the art of plating.

My pantry staples

Cardamom, saffron, rose water, lemon and black pepper – these are all essentials in Emirati cuisine.



Dubai World
Hospitality
Championship



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The HOSPITALITY SHOW 2014

The Dubai World Hospitality Championship
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from October 30, 2014 to November 1, 2014 at the Sheikh Saeed Halls -
Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

The event will feature hospitality items like tableware,
crockery and other dinning accessories like

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- Other related products



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